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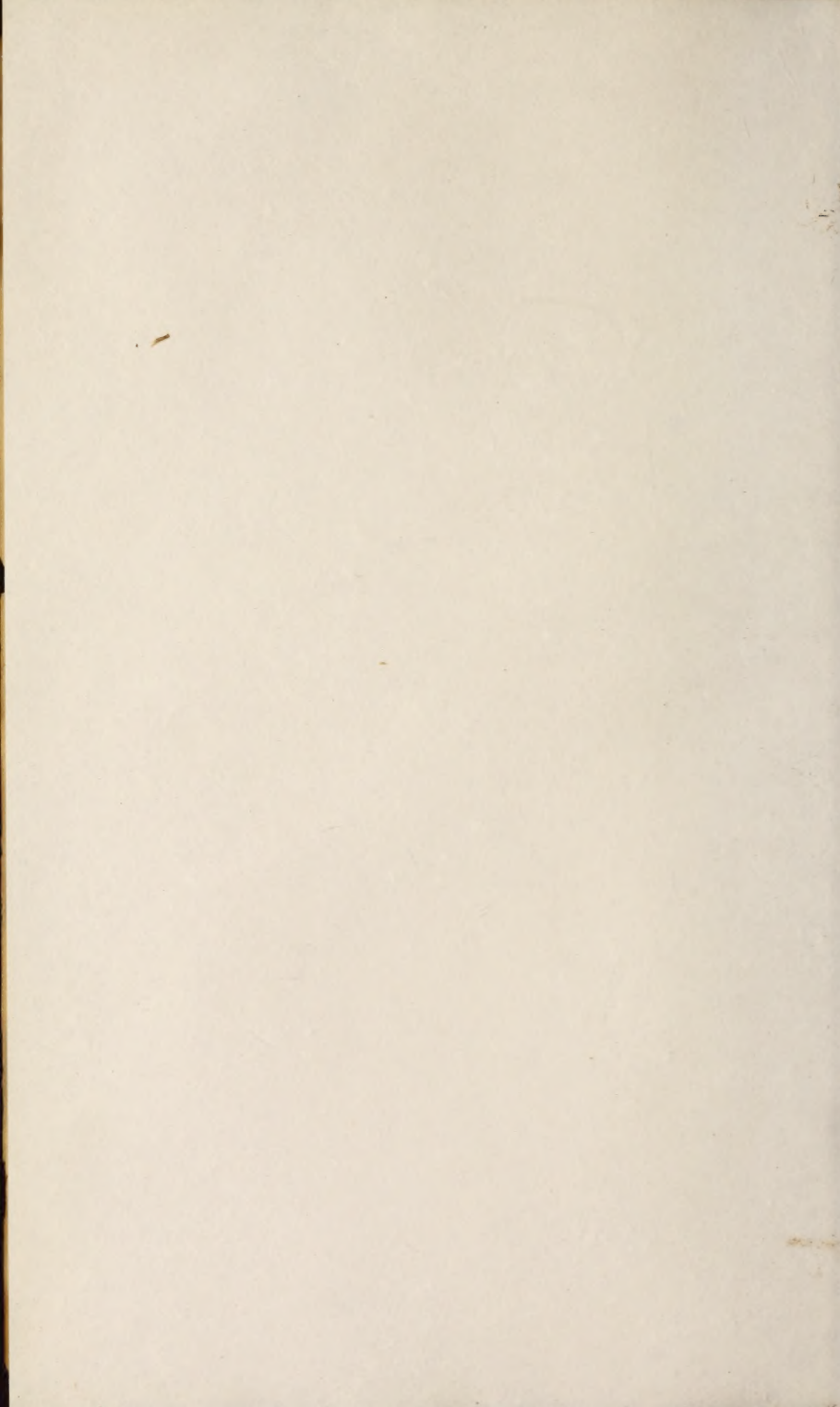
Division

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Section

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Number



A
DISCOURSE

Concerning the
PRIESTHOOD

O F
JESUS CHRIST:

IN WHICH
The *Date*, and *Order* of his *Priesthood*,

AS ALSO
The *Place*, *Time*, and *Manner* of his
performing the *Functions* thereof,
are distinctly consider'd.

WITH
A PREFACE in Vindication of the A U -
T H O R of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*,

Occasion'd by the
Misrepresentations of a late Writer.

Moore, Thomas

*Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to
be uttered; seeing ye are dull of hearing. Heb. v. 11.*

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DISCOURSE

Concerning the

PRIESTHOOD

OF

JESUS CHRIST

IN A NATION

The Doctrine and Order of his Priesthood,

AS ALSO

The Place, Time, and Manner of his

performing the Sacrificial Service,

are distinctly considered.

WITH

A PREFACE in Vindication of the Author,

in Answer to the Right Hon. the House of

Commons,

in their Resolution of a late Winter.

By

JOHN WILKINSON, Minister of the Gospel at Newbury.

LONDON,

Printed by J. WILKINSON, at the Sign of the Green Tree, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near the North Gate.

MDCCLXXIII.

[Printed by J. WILKINSON, at the Sign of the Green Tree, in St. Dunstons Church-yard, near the North Gate.]

A
P R E F A C E

I N

Vindication of the AUTHOR of *the*
Epistle to the Hebrews.

THE credit of the author of
the epistle to the Hebrews,
upon whose authority my
argument chiefly depends, being
attacked in a late * *Dissertation,* I
find myself interested in his defence.
The case is briefly thus. He having
considered *Abraham* as *giving tithes*

* *On the history of Melchisedec.* This Preface was
written in answer, and shewn to Mr. Chubb, many
months before his death.

to *Melchisedec*, Heb. vii. 2, 4. is charged, by the *Dissertator*, with contradicting the *Jewish history* or *pentateuch*. To fix which charge upon him, 'tis alledged, " That that history does not yield a proper ground for such opinion to be built upon, viz. That *Abraham* gave tithes to *Melchisedec*, but the contrary;" which he says plainly appears by attending to what he calls " the natural thread of the story. For when the historian had observed that *Melchisedec* brought forth bread and wine, and also that he was the (or a) priest of the most high God, he added, and he (viz. *Melchisedec*) blessed him (viz. *Abraham*) and said, Blessed be *Abraham* of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the most high God which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. Here we see that the active person, or the person speaking,

" was

“ was *Melchisedec*; and the passive
 “ person, or the person spoken to
 “ and of, was *Abraham*; the histo-
 “ rian goes on without the least *hint*
 “ or *intimation* of a *change* of persons,
 “ and observes, that he, the *active*
 “ person, or the person speaking,
 “ *viz. Melchisedec*, gave him, the
 “ *passive* person, or the person spoken
 “ to and of, *viz. Abraham*, *tithes*
 “ *of all*. Thus we see, that the
 “ historian is very *particular* and
 “ *express* that it was *Melchisedec*
 “ which gave tithes to *Abraham*, and
 “ not *Abraham* to *Melchisedec* †.”

In answer to which, I will bring
 a passage from the same historian,
Gen. xviii. 7, 8, 9. And Abraham
ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf
tender and good, and gave it unto a
young man; and he hasted to dress it.
And he took butter, and milk, and
the calf which he had dressed and set

it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold in the tent. Here, by the help of the Dissertator's criticism it will, say I, with equal justice, plainly appear, that Sarah was the wife of the young man who dressed the calf, and not the wife of Abraham. "For when the historian had observed" that Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man, he added, and he (viz. the young man) hastened to dress it. "The historian goes on "without the least hint or intimation "of a change of persons, and observes, that" he (the young man) took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he (the young man) stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him (the young man) Where is Sarah thy wife?

wife? And he said, Behold in the tent. “ Thus we see the historian is very *particular* and *express* that ” *Sarah* was the wife of the young man who dressed the calf, and not the wife of *Abraham*.

Now whether this is not as proper a ground for such an opinion to be built upon (*viz. that Sarah was the wife of the young man who dressed the calf, and not the wife of Abraham;*) as that upon which Mr. C—— has built this opinion, *viz. “ That Melchisedec gave tithes to Abraham, and not Abraham to Melchisedec,”* is submitted to the reader’s judgment.

Again ; I observe from this historian, that the relative term *he*, does not always refer to the *active* person, though the next antecedent ; and that a change of persons is oft to be understood determinable by the context, without any other hint or intimation of such change. Thus in *verse 10. of the same chapter*, ’tis added,

added, *And he said* (*he*, who? Not the active person antecedent, who said *Sarah his wife was in the tent*; but a change of persons is to be understood; another *he* being evidently introduced as speaking to the former: *And he said*) *I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.* So again, *Chap. iv. 9, 10. And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?* Here, though the Lord be the active person, or the person speaking, yet by *he* is intended *Cain*, the passive person, or person spoken to. Again, when it follows, *And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.* Though *Cain* was the active person, or person speaking just before, yet by *He* here is understood the Lord, the passive person, or person before spoken to. I might give other instances

instances from the same historian, but these are sufficient to shew the Dissertator's *criticism* is *false*, and *inconclusive* to his purpose.

The *Dissertator* in support of his charge next proceeds to take notice, "That the circumstances which attended the case *do not* admit it to be otherwise. For, first, *Melchisedec* had *done nothing* to or for *Abraham* which called for such a grateful return; whereas, *Abraham* had laid *Melchisedec* and all the people in that neighbourhood under an obligation of gratitude to him, in that he had rid the country of their great oppressor." Here I observe, the *Dissertator's* account of the history is as false as his criticism. The circumstances which attended the case *do* admit the fact to be quite other wise than he has represented it. For, It plainly appears that *Melchisedec* was a neutral prince in the quarrel and war of the kings; and consequently,

frequently, *Abraham* in engaging in it, and beating *Chedorlaomer* and his confederates, did nothing to, or for *Melchisedec*, which called for such a grateful return from him. *Melchisedec* might have enjoyed the benefit of his *neutrality* and pacific disposition, which side soever had the better. Whereas, on the other hand, *Abraham* was *nearly concerned* in the late progress of these princes arms. 'They had *plundered Sodom* and took *Lot*, *Abraham's* nephew, and *all his goods*, and *carried him away captive*, *Gen. xiv. ver. 11, 12.*---That his deceased brother's son whom he had brought up with him from *Haran*, from his native country, from his kindred and from his father's house, and who for many years had sojourned with him, till lately obliged to separate for mutual convenience and accommodation, (*Chap. xii. 1, 4. xiii. 1, 5, 6.*) that he, I say, should be thus pillag'd of his wealth and forc'd into

into *slavery*, was an affecting consideration to *Abraham*. He was greatly interested in this event. His nephew's welfare was next his own, he being nearest of kin to him; *Abraham* having no seed of his own at that time. This induced him to engage in the war. *When Abraham heard that Lot, the dear remains of his brother, was taken captive, he armed his trained servants.* This was the *true motive* to his taking his confederates, *Aner, Eſchol, and Mamre*; and making himself the *principal* in the *pursuit* of the victors, ver. 13, 14. But *Melchisedec* who was *neuter*, had no such family interest nor concern in the affair; and therefore stiles *Chedorlaomer* and the kings that were with him, *Abraham's enemies*, not his own, ver. 20. Again,

After the battle *Melchisedec treated Abraham* and the people that were with him, as they passed through his territory, in a
a 2 *hospitable*

hospitable manner, who 'tis granted†, must have been greatly fatigued by their pursuing after, and fighting with *Chedorluomer* and his company: and in this point of view, was not *Abraham* greatly obliged to *Melchisedec*, rather than *Melchisedec* under an obligation of gratitude to *Abraham*?---Again,

Melchisedec was the priest, the public head and officer in the worship of the true God in that country, where *Abraham* was a stranger: and therefore, suppose *Abraham* was himself a priest at home in his own house and family; it is very improbable *Melchisedec*, in whose province he was, should give tithes to him.

Lastly, It appears that *Melchisedec* blessed *Abraham* in a solemn religious way and manner, and assisted or joined with him in blessing his God for the victory. For the histo-

rian tells us *He (Melchisedec) was THE PRIEST of the most high God: intimating that in this character he performed this service: and he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God which hath delivered THINE enemies into thy hand, ver. 18, 19, 20.* If his blessing implied no more than interesting his good wishes with God for *Abraham's* prosperity; *this* in a king, and in one of his character, and on such an occasion, was a *favour Abraham* could not well be insensible of. These are *circumstances* which attended the case, and duly weighed, discover our critick's *rashness*; who saith†, “there was not the “*shadow of a reason* for *Abraham* to “have given tithes to *Melchisedec*; “whereas there was the *strongest* “reason for *Melchisedec* thus to shew his

† Page 13.

“ gratitude

“gratitude to *Abraham*.” But, he proceeds.

† “Nor, *secondly*, had he (*Abraham*) any thing in the valley of “*Shaveh of his own*, to make a present with, or to give tithes of.” Well, supposing, but not granting, that *Abraham* and his servants when they set out on this expedition took nothing with them but their weapons of war, and what was necessary to annoy the enemy : *Had Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar*, who formed a powerful league and held the balance for *twelve* years successively, no valuable effects in their train? no peculiar badges or ornaments of distinction suited to their characters and the age in which they lived?---Now such things, if found in their camp, or upon them, would

be adjudged *by civilians* to *Abraham*, as *his* legal prize and property. The Dissertator therefore being aware that a question of this nature would arise in the mind of his reader, has thrown this note in his *margin*†, “ it is not “ to be supposed that they needlessly “ incumber’d themselves with *goods* “ and *riches*, thereby to lay a foundation of *spoil* for their enemies ; “ nor does the history give *any countenance* to such a supposition.” But what a *shuffle* is this ! what has “ *needlessly incumber’d*,” to do in the case ? and “ *thereby to lay a foundation of spoil for their enemies?*” --- ’Tis well known the *Eastern* nations were wont in *policy*, since, if not in those early times, to carry their best effects with them to battle. And if these princes had *any* effects with them at all (tho’ their *apparel* and *weapons of war*, might ALONE make a *valuable booty*)

† Page 15.

the history will *countenance*, *this*, that *Abraham* made himself *master* of their *camp* as well as *slaughter'd* the *kings*; *for* he divided himself *against* them, he and his *servants* by *night*, and *smote* them and *pursued* them *unto* *Hobab*, ver. 15. But truth is shaded by an *artful* arrangement of words, whilst what is to the point is evaded. The Dissertator being *conscious* that to admit the supposition that these princes had with or upon them something of this quality or kind (no matter in what it consisted) would be to furnish *Abraham* with *materials* whereof to make a present of the tithe to *Melchisedec*, as *conquerors* usually did to the gods and to their friends; and so to contradict this assertion of his, “ that *Abraham* “ *had nothing* in the valley of *Shaveh*, “ of his own, to make a present with, “ or to give tithes of:” he, I say, *artfully* provides against it, and goes on---“ To suppose, as the author of
 2 “ the

“ the epistle to the *Hebrews* does,
 “ that *Abraham* gave to *Melchisedec*
 “ a *tenth* part of the goods or *spoil*
 “ that had been *retaken* from *Che-*
 “ *dorlaomer*, this supposition appears
 “ to be altogether groundless.” But,
 I ask, is not this a *groundless calum-*
ny? Where does the author to the
Hebrews suppose any such thing? Does
 he any where *hint* or *intimate* that
Abraham accepted of, and appropri-
 ated the least part of the goods *reta-*
ken from *Chedorlaomer*, that was, an-
 tecedent to the war, the property of
Bera and the vanquished people, to
 himself, or to any such use? As he
 does not hint or insinuate any such
 thing, his saying *Abraham* gave a
tenth part of all the spoils to *Melchi-*
sedec [the word *all* being evidently
 the historian’s,] will lead any man of
 candour to judge that the *author to*
the Hebrews could not possibly mean
 more by *the tenths of all*, than the
historian himself did: which, proba-
 bly,

bly, was only the *tenths* of HIS *enemies effects*, which *Abraham* seized upon as *his prey and spoil*; and not of *their effects* (viz. *Bera's* and his people's) which he generously refused to take *from a thread even to a shoe-latchet*.

Thus you have the substance of what the Differtator advances to convict the *author of the epistle to the Hebrews* of ERROR. If it amounts to no more than *misrepresentation and abuse*, (and such I think it apparently *is*) the credit and authority of the aforesaid author will be duly regarded.

I observe upon the whole,---The author of the epistle to the *Hebrews* has given no *new* opinions touching this piece of history; but argues with the *Jews* upon their own received principles. They always understood the *fact* to be as he considers it. And here I ask, Can it be fairly thought that they, for whose immediate use the Pentateuch was written, who
wanted

wanted for no respect for their great ancestor, nor skill nor vanity to place him in the most advantageous light; I say, can it be fairly thought that they from *this history* would believe that *Abraham payed tithes to Melchisedec*, if the *contrary* was *therein* (as this Differtator pretends) “*very particular and exprefs?*”----But---Assuming priests are *not the only men who deal in craft, and handle the scriptures deceitfully*: The *moral philosophers* of the age, or rather *they who would pass for such*, are generally disposed to do the like. Happy would it be if they employed their faculties in removing the *rubbish* the former have cast on *revelation*, instead of *adding more* and labouring in vain to *undermine* revelation itself!

As to the ensuing Discourse, it was occasioned by a survey of the grand scheme of the gospel, and is published solely with a view to obviate

those difficulties which have been made to attend one part of that scheme, *viz. The death of Christ.* His death, indeed, is not here considered in all its great and important ends, for reasons that will appear in the sequel. Whether I have fairly proved every *principle* I have advanced therein or not; I presume it will be granted in favour of the *method* I have pursued, That *the true single notion of Christ's priesthood ought first to be stated and explained, before any account be given of what is or is not his sacrifice.*---If the subject be not handled in so clear and concise a manner as might be wished; it must be remembered that MANY THINGS AND HARD TO BE UTTERED appertain thereto. For that *these* belong to Jesus Christ, and not to *Melchisedec*, is plain from hence---That our writer to the *Hebrews* says nothing of the *latter* but what was said in, or supposed by, the *Jewish* scriptures,

scriptures, long before : Whereas, of the *former*, many things are said, concerning his priesthood, and those in such a manner [to wit, *by the Aaronical priests falling short of perfection in their persons and noblest service*] that was not easy for *Jews*, with their *childish* prejudices, to comprehend. And in truth, the doctrines of the last and most finished revelation of the mind and will of God to mankind, such as we allow the writings of the New Testament to be, will be obscure and difficult to those who shall judge thereof by *wrong* principles.

'Tis justice to acknowledge an obligation to the late learned Doctor *Whitby*, *note on* Heb. v. 5. whence I had the *first* hint touching the *date* of Christ's priesthood. I am likewise greatly obliged to some *reverend* and *learned friends*, (who did me the honour to peruse these papers) for several sentiments, as well as correct-

ness

*particularly
to Dr. Sykes,
who was an
intimate
friend of the
author.*

ness of expression. If there are points in which I differ from them, and from truth itself, as, possibly, there are ; I can say, (in the words of Mr. *Pierce*, of whom I have taken some thoughts) “ I do it not wilfully, “ and desire to be thankful that I “ have such an high-priest as will “ bear with the ignorant, and those “ who are out of the way.”

The reader will do well to peruse the epistle to the *Hebrews*, especially the places referred to in this Discourse, before he pronounce *sentence*. The only favour I ask, is, that I may be accounted *one* of that number *who love the Lord Jesus Christ in INCORRUPTION*.

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E R R A T A.

- Page 2. l. 24. for *Priest* read *Priesthood*.
 6. l. penult. after *order*, r. *the*.
 22. l. 4. from bottom, after *equally*, r. *or alike*.
 38. l. 2. after *another*, r. *made or*.
 52. l. 3. after *do*, r. *this sense of*.
 67. l. penult. after *viii.* put 5.
 100. for Prop. vi. r. Prop. viii.
 107. l. penult. for *for*, r. *far*.
 122. l. 5. for *exampler*, r. *exemplar*.

INTRODUCTION.

THE *priesthood of Jesus Christ*, which is generally thought to be a subject of *great importance*, as well as of a *difficult and obscure nature*, has not had the advantage of being treated of by many of the *inspired writers of the new testament*. For, besides that all the *evangelists* pass it over in *silence*, or at least do not mention it in any direct positive way and manner; St. *Paul* (who is the largest *writer* of any in the *epistolary* way) is observed to do the like by it in his several *epistles* to the *gentile churches*. Tho' the gospel scheme was now perfected, and this Apostle, in particular, had a full and comprehensive view of it, yet he is not found throughout these epistles *once* to celebrate *Christ* directly as a *priest*, or to speak of his *having* or *executing* any such office. As saint *Paul* kept back nothing that was profitable unto them, nor shunned to declare the whole counsel of *God*^a; and passed over

^a Acts xx. 20, 27.

in silence to them the priesthood of his Lord and master, it seems to follow as a just and natural inference, *that, whatever this dignity was, it was not necessary for the gentile christians to know and acknowledge Jesus Christ directly therein.* They were not ignorant of priests in general: the superstition and idolatry in which they formerly lived was conducted by men in this character. Had St. Paul told them, *Jesus Christ was a great high priest,* they would have understood the terms, but probably not to any advantage to his master and his cause. The truth is, the priesthood and ministry of these men was too mean and absurd to represent *Christ* by.

Not that those *christians* were, therefore, defective in necessary knowledge: no; they knew and submitted to *Christ* in an higher dignity, of which his priesthood was but a part, *viz. as Lord and head over all things to the church.* This is a character uniform, fixed and essential to *Jesus* our saviour, and in which his high priest is included. For it not only contains the salutary work, influence and authority of that office, but exalts him *far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come*^b. So that,

^b Eph. i. 21, 22.

in the respect they paid to Christ in this grand character, the *gentile* christians took in whatever related to, or concerned them to know of, his priesthood.

When the apostles *first* preached ^c Christ to the *jews*, little or no notice was taken of this *priesthood* of his, altho' they quoted the only *prophecy* in which it was foretold. The temple was then standing, and an order of priesthood in being, who offered gifts according to the law. It does not appear that the priesthood of Christ was the subject of any discourse to them, till the *epistle to the hebrews* was *penn'd*. This is supposed to have been about *five*, or at most *eight* years before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; when the total subversion of their church and state put a period to the *aaronical* ministry. As the *jews* had been accustomed to worship God in a pompous, ceremonious way, and retained a fondness for the same, it was no easy task to reconcile them to the simplicity of the gospel; and very difficult about this time, to preserve those of them steady who had embraced it, because, not only of the persecution to which they were exposed, but of the evil influence and example of some among them, who had *forsaken the christian assemblies*,

^c Acts ii. 34.

4 INTRODUCTION.

and relapsed to their old *ritual* religion. Wherefore, to secure the present, and gain future converts, from among them, to the christian dispensation, (*which had the advantage in every respect of the legal*) seems to be the manifest *design* of that writer. In order to which he considers Jesus of a better capacity, of a higher rank and dignity than *Aaron*, even vested with a *royal, sacerdotal character*, according to an *ancient prediction* of the *Messiah*; and in those familiar, bold, and striking images, which the tabernacle and temple worship afforded, he draws the superior glory, excellence and perfection of his ministry.

From hence it seems plain that the concern we christians have with Jesus Christ in, and under, the name and notion of a *priest*, is of a *secondary* nature; and chiefly ariseth from our acquaintance with the *jewish* scriptures. We are now in possession of those *sacred records*; and whilst we attend to the peculiar institutions of that church, and the several promises, from time to time given, of a *better dispensation to come*, we are not only furnished with a good argument for the truth of the Gospel, but are enabled to run a comparison to evince its excellence. Whatever advantage the priesthood was of to the *jewish* church, that
(and

(and much more) is Christ to christians. Therefore the terms *priest*, *sacrifice*, *atonement*, &c. are adopted into the writings of the *new testament*, which tho' figurative and metaphorical (as are all the terms, by which we express our ideas of spiritual things) do denote something *real* and *proper*, and well suit the subject of our salvation by Jesus Christ, as that contains *remission of sins* and *reconciliation to God*; for so far was the priesthood concerned. We must however observe, that, in the writings of the *new testament*, where the sacrificial language occurs, the priesthood of Christ is not always intended, or even hinted at. The *gentiles* as well as *jews*, had been accustomed to *sacrificial rites*, but had not equal reason to be alike attached to the office and dignity of priests. The former, on their conversion, could receive many truths relating to their duty and happiness, in words and phrases borrowed from *pagan lustrations*; without having Christ, at the same time, drawn to them in the particular character of a *pontifex maximus*. But then *the priesthood of Christ*, its direct, single notion, is made the subject of discourse to none but believing *jews*. For this reason we are limited and confined almost intirely to the authority of *the writer of the epistle to the hebrews*, in what we have to offer on this head;

6 INTRODUCTION.

head ; whom we will therefore distinguish by the title of *our author* ; and, in the best manner we can, endeavour to enter into his spirit and sense.

We will deliver the principal matter in several *propositions*. By these, if true, we shall be assisted to form a just conception of *the priesthood of Christ*, and may obtain the knowledge of sundry particulars, as its *date*, and *singular order*; *time*, *place*, and *manner* of his performing the *functions* thereof.

P R O-

PROPOSITION I.

Jesus Christ is a Priest.

BY the term *Priest* given to Christ, here and throughout the whole of this *discourse*, we mean, not a *presbyter*, *elder*, or *venerable person*, as it is used to denote among *protestants*; but a *SACRIFICER*, or one who is properly qualified to offer, in a *publick capacity*, for *others*, a *present*, or *gift*, to God. A *present*, or *gift* by him offered, we call a *sacrifice*, *offering*, *oblation*: which last mentioned terms we consider as synonymous.

That, in this strict and proper sense of the word, Jesus Christ is a *priest*, or, is one who is qualified to offer up a sacrifice in a *publick capacity*, may be proved by the authority and tenor of the epistle to the *hebrews*; from whence we need only select at present these few plain passages. *Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus*^a. For

id. Mr
Harris has
on the priest
word, as if
his law.

^a Chap. iii. 1.

every high priest, taken from among men, is ordained for men, to offer gifts and sacrifices^b: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer^c.

There are two celebrated orders of priesthood recorded in scripture, to wit, the order of Melchisedec, and the order of Aaron. Now, as both these bear some kind of respect to the priesthood of Jesus Christ, it will be natural to enquire;—Is Jesus a priest of either of these orders? or, is his priesthood like to either of these? or, was he a priest of both these orders, as some learned men^d have conjectured?

By way of answer to these queries, I shall content myself at present with observing,—That, as the service belonging to the *jewish* tabernacle and temple was the portion of the tribe of Levi, and the priesthood was by law restrained to Aaron's family, it was not possible that Jesus, who, it is evident, sprang out of Judah, should be a priest of the order of Aaron.—Again: As Moses, by whom the law was given, spake nothing of the tribe of Judah, concerning priesthood^e, there was no proper legal authority, by which Jesus could be a priest after, or like unto, the order of Aaron. All Israel, even the Levites themselves, were deemed

^b Chap. v. 1.
Catechism.

^c Chap. viii. 3.

^d Dr. Hammond's
^e Heb. vii. 14.

strangers ¹ to this office, and could not perform the functions thereof, without a manifest violation of the law. Jesus, who was *made under the law*, was subject to it. His greatest enemies, who carefully watched all his words and actions, that they might have whereof to accuse him, never had it to lay to his charge, that he set up for, or affected to be, *high priest*, or any priest at all.

If it be said, that Jesus might sustain and execute this office according to the order of *Aaron*, by virtue of his *prophetick mission*, as *Samuel*, *David*, ² and others have done: I answer; whatever was the case in those instances, if Jesus had been eligible to, and had ministered in, this office, it would, without all doubt, have appeared in the *history of his life*, recorded by the *four evangelists*. But in them we don't read of his laying claim to any prerogative, or performing any function peculiar to priesthood; no, nor of his giving so much as a *hint* to his disciples and followers, that he *was a priest*. This affords strong presumptive evidence for the following truth, namely, *that during the life of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, it was no part of his character or profession to be a priest*.

If this be granted only with regard to *Aaron's order*; and it be said, that the

¹ Numb. xvi. 40. ² 1 Sam. vii. 9. 2 Sam. vi. 13.

Jewish records contain a *prophecy*, in which priesthood is *expressly assigned to the Messiah*, and that therefore it must belong to Jesus, if he were that person : I answer ; It is true, there is such a prophecy ; but not belonging to Christ in those circumstances that attended him when he was upon earth. It was not applicable to him at that time, for it was not true of him. The prophecy speaks of a priest that should *be, or live for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*^b. Whereas Jesus, when he suffered upon the cross, *he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost*ⁱ. He could not be a priest *for ever*, who thus was removed by death. And as, during the time we are speaking of, Jesus made no claim to this dignity himself, neither does it appear that any of his disciples did ascribe it to him. They speak of him as *a teacher sent of God, the son of God, and the king of Israel*, without discovering any notion they had of his being then a priest. Yea, the *negative* is asserted by our author to the *Hebrews*, in so many express words : *For, if he were on earth, he should not be a priest*^k.

^b Ps. cx. 4.ⁱ Mark xv. 37.^k Heb. viii. 4.

PROPOSITION II.

The time when Jesus was called to, and invested with, the order of priesthood, was at his resurrection from the dead.

ACcording to the *jewish* system of religion, the priesthood was *an honour no man could take unto him, until that he was called of God, as was Aaron*¹; and was duly qualified and consecrated thereto. For, as the high priest was to be *ordained for men, to officiate in things pertaining to God; it became him (God), well suited his perfections, and was his proper work and prerogative, for whom all things, and by whom all things* of this nature are ordered and disposed, *to make him perfect, to appoint, and finally and compleatly qualify him, who should be the captain of their salvation.*----Now, as the design and end of the priesthood in question, was more elevated and noble than that of any other order; better calculated for the interest of mankind, and more worthy of God, whose off-pring men are, *viz. to bring many sons unto glory*: And, as these were in a great measure lost to themselves, sunk and disgrac'd by flesh and blood, and the evils

¹ Heb. v. 4.

incident thereto ; *it behoved him who was to carry the plan into execution, in all things to be made like unto his brethren ; that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people^m. Agreeable to these principles, and in pursuance thereof, Jesus was made perfect, fitted and consecrated through sufferings. The days of his flesh afforded him an exercise and trial of his obedience to the divine will ; and at the same time that it proved and made his fidelity appear, for so important a trust, it brought him intimately acquainted with all the infirmities and temptations of his brethren (sin only excepted) ; so that he could sympathize with them both in their life and in their death. And being thus capable of truly representing them, and bearing their interests in his own person, into another world, or of becoming the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, he was called of God an high priestⁿ. So that Jesus did not thrust himself into this office, or arrogate to himself the honour of being an high priest, but he was called thereto ; duly inaugurated and installed therein. This was at his resurrection from the dead. Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest ; but he that said unto him, Thou art my son, to day have I*

^m Heb. ii. 14, 17. ⁿ V. 9, 10.

begotten thee °. That this passage relates to the resurrection of Christ, is evident from St. Paul's sermon to the Jews at *Antioch in Pisidia*, in which he tells them, *that the promise, which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee* ^p. The words, *this day have I begotten thee*, being interpreted of, and restrained to the *resurrection* of Christ, by so good an authority, our author's use of them, in his argument with the *Hebrews*, is evidently this, to let them know, that God himself invested Jesus with this order, when he raised him up from the dead. *Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest*; he did not put on this excellent dignity of his own accord, *but he glorified him therewith, who said, thou art my son, to day have I begotten thee*. Here is a plain allusion to the antient privilege of the first-born in a family, or state, whose birthright the priesthood was. Jesus Christ, who is *the first begotten from the dead*, the first among the children of men, brought into a new and incorruptible state, became *heir of all things* in it, and consequently of the priesthood. As his death was originally and principally concerted by

° V. 5.

^p Acts xiii. 33.

the *Jews*, for asserting that he was *the son of God*⁹; the interposition of God in raising him up from the dead, was an event so very extraordinary and significant, that it spoke plainly in his behalf, that he *was* what he professed himself to be. For this reason God is fitly introduced on this occasion, uttering in the *language of facts* (the true articulate voice of God) those words of the second Psalm, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE. The *decree*, so long ago declared in that *prophecy of the Messiah* (for certain it is, St. Paul and our author, if they were not both the same person, so understood that psalm to be) was now unfolded, fixed and determined for law; God himself proclaiming, in and by the most expressive and significant action that could be, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*. And, in saying this, he acknowledged his dignity of the sacerdotal kind, or allowed to him the honour and privilege of his brigh-right, what of course belonged to him; speaking as it were to this purpose at the same time, and in the same emphatical manner or *language of facts*, and thereby fulfilling what David predicted of him in another psalm¹, *Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*.. Here we see

⁹ John v. 18.—xix. 7. ¹Heb. v. 6.

both the *time, way, and manner* of the *introduction* of Christ into this office. *David* in spirit, long after the levitical law was imposed, foretold---the grant of the most eminent kind of priesthood, by God, to a son and successor of his; a grant, which was made by God *upon oath*, to shew its *certainty*, as the *word of the oath*, the form and expression of it, doth its stability and perpetuity. *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*^s. This oath of God, prophetically given to *David*, concerning his son and Lord, occasioned Jesus Christ to be considered *as a priest*; or was the original ground upon which his priesthood was founded, as the law was the ground of the Aaronical: And God's raising him from the dead, was the accomplishment of his oath; *for because he continueth ever*, in indissoluble life, *he hath*, according to the word of the oath, *an unchangeable priesthood*^t. This oath was performed in the inauguration and installment of Jesus. Here then commenced the priesthood of Christ, and from hence it bore date, to wit, *at his resurrection*.

^s Pf. cx. 4.

^t Heb. vii. 24.

COROLLARY I.

There is a wide difference between the order of Christ's priesthood, and that of the Aaronical in point of duration, succession, and personal perfection. The Aaronical high priesthood admitted men of infirmity, subject to mortality and death, and, consequently, of a change or succession of persons therein. But it is otherwise with the high priesthood of Christ, inasmuch as it is founded not on the law of a carnal commandment, but on the power of an endless life^u. For Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him; so that he can give place to no successor, nor admit any change in his priesthood as the Aaronical did. They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law, maketh the son, who is consecrated for evermore^x. In these respects therefore, the Jewish high priesthood, and the priesthood of Christ, will bear no comparison. For which reason he is not called a priest after

^u Heb. vii. 16.^x verses 23, 24, 28.

the order of *Aaron*, but, *a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*. Not that the *Melchisedecian* is the same with the priesthood of Christ; no, they are different: for if it was in all respects the same, *Melchisedec* could not *abide a priest continually*^y, as by his having the figure of perpetuity in scripture he is allowed to do; but would have a successor in Christ. Besides, it is not only derogatory to the honour of Christ to be the *successor* of any one in his priesthood, but contrary to the plain truth of things; for he received it by primogeniture and right of inheritance, of him who said, *thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee*; the effect of which act or operation of God being *in the power of endless life*, Christ, strictly speaking, becomes both the *first* and the *last*, and the *only one* of his order. Accordingly he is represented in vision, saying, *I am alpha and omega, the first and the last*^z. Wherefore he is called a priest, not *of*, but *after*, or according to, *the order of Melchisedec*.

Who this eminent person, *Melchisedec*, was, has puzzled many an inquisitive head. But any farther knowledge of, or a more circumstantial account concerning him, than the scripture hath given, seems unnecessary if not impertinent, as it might tend to de-

^y Heb. vii. 3.

^z Rev. i. 11.

stroy, or obscure, the figure the wisdom of God allotted him to bear in those divine books. Our author, after asserting, *Jesus is made an high-priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec*; proceeds to give the view he had of him, as he stands on record, in *Genesis*. “For, taking *Moses*^a for a
 “testimony of *this Melchisedec*, he is king
 “of *Salem*, priest of the most high God,
 “who met *Abraham* returning from the
 “slaughter of the kings, and blessed him: to
 “whom also *Abraham* gave a tenth part of
 “all: first, being by interpretation of his
 “name, king of righteousness, and after
 “that also, by interpretation of his city,
 “king of *Salem*, which is king of peace.
 “And in this book, that gives so particular account of the origin and generation
 “of men and things, he is the only great
 “person mentioned without father, without
 “mother, without descent, having neither
 “beginning of days nor end of life; but made
 “like unto the (or a) son of God, abideth
 “a priest continually.” From this brief view, or description, it is not to be infer’d, that he was not a man, as some have groundlessly imagined; but, we are to consider him as such, a cotemporary with *Abraham* and the king of *Sodom*, who was himself a king of a city, or nation, then in being,

^a Heb. iii. 5. vii. 1—4.

and a priest of the most high God at large, whose office was not restrained to one particular tribe, or family, of men. If you inquire, indeed, into his *genealogy*, as the *Jews*, who were fond of such kind of learning, probably did, in *David's* time; being curious to know *who this was*, to whom so great a man as the patriarch *Abraham*, payed *tithes*; and of whom he, that was called *the friend of God*, received a *blessing*? of what stock and family he came; how long he lived; who succeeded him, &c? I say, if you enquire thus, you will find the sacred record, which mentions the *lineage*, or *birth*, or *death*, of all the other great persons of that age whose names are there entered, wholly silent of *his*, as if he had been of the *immortal race*, a *son of God*^b, and not like

^b That the Author to the *Hebrews* saw *Melchisedec*, by *Moses's* account, to appear rather as *the son of God*, than as the son of any mortal; and, consequently, that his order of priesthood requireth a *filial relation*, in the person called after it, to God, is, I think, evident,—from the *sum* of the description, or general likeness above given of him: *But made like unto the son of God, abideth a priest continually.* And from chap. v. 5, 6. *Christ glorified not himself, to be made an high priest; but, he that said unto him, thou art my son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* Which quotations, from the ii. and cx. Psalms, he joins together, as illustrating each other, and expressive of the same thing. Again, chap. iii. 1, 6. *Christ*, he says, is an high priest, *as a son*, over God's house:—Must not *Melchisedec*, then, after whose order he is called an high priest, be conceived of, *as a son*, too? That *Melchisedec* was a priest over

like an inhabitant of this world. Upon all these accounts, *David*, who knew perfection was not to be obtained by the levitical priesthood, in spirit foretold that *another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec*: i. e. one, who should be a *royal priest, a son of God*, an extensively useful, *immortal man*; whose priesthood should be *greater and better* than that established by *Moses*, and never *change*, or pass from his person to another. Now we see *Jesus*, whom God hath brought again from the dead, *enthroned*, by him, as *his son*, high priest over *his house*, or family, for ever; which verifies what was evident from the sacred oracle, in the mouth of *David*, that, *after the similitude of Melchisedec, there ariseth another priest*.*

Abraham and his house (which under the legal oeconomy, was the house of God) he proves at large, chap. vii. 4,—11. And that the royal poet had a like view, with our author, of *Melchisedec*, and his order of priesthood, may be presumed from their being inspired by one and the same divine spirit. I have the pleasure to add, that what is here suggested, must be admitted beyond all doubt, if the critical notes of a very learned person (vid. *Critical notes on some passages of scripture*, lately published) on Psalm cx. 3. are just: Who after pointing out the corruptions, crept into the text, and giving probable reasons for his corrections, renders the verse thus:— “*And with thee, O prince, in the day of thy power, thy saints thro’ mercy clothed with splendor. Before the morning star I begot thee my son.*” It follows, the Lord hath sworn and will not repent, *thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

* Heb. vii. 1—16.

COROLLARY II.

Jesus Christ was not a priest in his life, nor in his death, nor did he execute any part of that office in his estate of humiliation, as some have taught^d. He was no sacrificer when on earth; or, on earth he offered up no sacrifice as a public head and officer in religion: He was then in no character or capacity for so doing. So far we have settled the date of Christ's priesthood, and seen the manner of his promotion to this dignity, or how he was ordained and introduced into it; and find it to be of a peculiar singular order.

PROPOSITION III.

The ministry of Christ, as high priest, is confined to heaven, and there his offering was made.

WE now come to treat of the *priestly functions* of Christ, and the *place* where they are executed. As he is, to all moral intents and purposes, as truly a priest to christians, as *Melchisedec*, or as ever *Aaron* and his successors were, to their people; so he is as truly a minister and offi-

^d Assemb. Catechism.

cer to them in the service of God. 'Tis not a meer honorary title given him, a *sine-cure*, or benefice, without work, which Jesus is put in possession of: but he hath a service to perform; *for every high priest is ordained to offer both gifts and sacrifices*, and therefore 'tis utterly repugnant to the end of his institution, to be idle and useless to us in heaven.—By *heaven*, I mean the place of God's *special residence*, where good men shall be made happy after the resurrection. If we consider the universe as one fabrick, and call it the *palace* of Almighty God, this is his *presence-chamber*; or if we call it a *temple*, this is the *sanctum sanctorum*. Accordingly Jesus is described by our author to be a *minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man*^c. Not officiating in the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but *in heaven itself, where he appears in the presence of God for us*^f. Heaven, in whatever part of space it be situated, is the place where his high office is executed.

Tho' God be every where present, he is not equally present every where. There may be more illustrious manifestations and effects of his glorious presence in one place than in another. Such the *Shechinah* of old

^c Heb. viii. 2.

^f Chap. ix. 24.

is supposed to be, which rested like a cloud of glory on the mercy seat in the *Jewish* tabernacle; whereby God is said to have his dwelling *between the cherubim*^g. An emblem, this, of the *throne of the glory of the majesty on high*, before which Jesus officiateth for us. And, tho' Jesus be a priest *for ever*, he is not a priest *every where*; for, *if he were on earth*, our author is *positive*, *he should not be a priest*; i. e. he should not have, or execute here, any office, as such; and that for the following reason, *seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law; who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see (saith he) that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount*^h. For our understanding whereof, let us observe,—that *Moses*, on the mount, was caused to see a model, or pattern, after which he was admonished to make the tabernacle, and to ordain and regulate the things pertaining to its service:—the patterns of the things in which they were to worship, having a divine original, or, being shewn, and prescribed to *Moses*, where the glory of the Lord was, are called *heavenly things*.—The tabernacle, and its furniture, *all* being made after their pattern,

^g Psalm lxxx. 1.

^h Heb. viii. 4, 5.

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are the *example* (imitation, copy) and *shadow of heavenly things* :—The priests by performing of, or ministering after the *manner* of, the tabernacle-worship, according to the law, *serve in the imitation*, or copy, or shadow of heavenly things.—The levitical priests serving in this *example* [imitation, copy] and *shadow of heavenly things*,—do exclude the ministry of any other *order* of priests on earth. The *sum* of which is, “ an earthly ministry to serve in the example and shadow of heavenly things, is “ already provided.” But now it is evident, that Jesus, by his being an high priest for us, seated on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, *hath obtained a more excellent ministry*ⁱ. A ministry too excellent to be performed any where else than before the most excellent glory of God in heaven. Wherefore Christ’s priesthood is *limited* as to *place*, tho’ not as to *duration*.

Here it was, to wit, *in heaven*, that Jesus *as a priest*, a true and proper SACRIFICER, made *his* offering. This is evident, because he could not offer as a priest any where else. He was not a priest on earth, therefore he could not offer as a priest on earth. He is a priest no where but in heaven ; therefore if he offereth any where as a priest, it must be

* Heb. viii. 6.

in heaven. But *our author* is clear in this matter, who gives the *Hebrews* to understand, that altho' the *Aaronical* will bear no comparison with Christ's priesthood, in point of *duration*, *succession*, and *personal perfection*; yet, as to the *place* and *parts of their ministry*, there is some small resemblance. Accordingly, he draws his comparison, between the priesthood and ministry of Christ in heaven, and the priesthood and ministry that was exercised in the *holy of holies*, on the great day of expiation. Whatever other priests, or whatever the high priest himself did, in any other place or day, does not, as I remember, come into his account, as a *shadow*, much less as a *type of Christ*. As, on this *anniversary*, the high priest entred into the *holy of holies*, and there offered sacrifice; so Jesus entred into heaven, and there offered his sacrifice^k. Let us turn to our author's own brief recapitulation of what he hath said on this head. *Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: we have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man.* " ¹An high priest, I say, of the heavenly sanctuary; " and therefore one, who must have some-

^k Heb ix, 7, 11, 12.

¹ *Whitby.*

“ thing to offer in that sanctuary.” “ ^mAnd
 “ his being an high priest in heaven is an
 “ evidence of his being a minister there.”
*For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts
 and sacrifices: Wherefore it is of necessity
 that this man have somewhat also to offer
 “ there. I say, there, and not on earth.”*
*for if he were on earth, he should not be a
 priest, “ or had he been still on earth he
 “ had not been a priest at all”. seeing that
 there are priests, that offer gifts according
 to the law. I have subjoined the sense of
 two learned commentators to shew that I am
 not singular in my apprehensions of this
 passage of our author. Every high priest,
 he says, is ordained to offer gifts and sacri-
 fices: wherefore it is of necessity that this
 man, who, by the fulfillment of God’s
 oath in his resurrection from the dead, is
 made a priest for us in heaven, should have
 somewhat also to offer. Any offering of his
 before he was ordained a priest, unless made
 by one of the *Aaronical* order, was destitute
 of the proper nature of a sacrifice, which
 he, whilst under the law, was oblig’d to
 offer. And, if he did not offer a sacrifice
 after he was ordained a priest, he was great-
 ly defective: for every high priest is ordain-
 ed for this purpose; wherefore it is of ne-
 cessity that this man have somewhat also to*

offer : He cannot be faithful to his trust and charge as a priest without it. On earth he could not offer a sacrifice ; *for, if he were on earth, he should not be a priest* : Wherefore, as he is a minister of the true tabernacle, a priest only in heaven, 'tis of necessity he should *there* make his offering. This, I think, is the plain sense of our author.

I know it has been said, but with what truth let the *reader* judge, " that Christ's offering himself above, is rather *commemorating* a sacrifice than *sacrificing*". Sure the *Jewish* high priest, when he entred into the *holy of holies*, did more than commemorate, or present to divine consideration a *past* sacrifice, or why all that solemn *apparatus*? A greater service the leuitical law did not prescribe. Is the commemorating a sacrifice more important than sacrificing? the bringing to divine consideration a *past act*, of a higher concern than the act itself? But, if the high priest did then and there make a proper oblation, or sacrifice, as he certainly did^e; why is not Christ's offering of himself above, a *sacrifice*, rather than *commemorating* a sacrifice? the *Jewish* high priest was a *figure*, or *shadow*, of Jesus our high priest, in a greater and more perfect tabernacle : was there more of immediate, active service, in the *shadow*, than in the

^e *Distinctions of sacrifices.* p. 104.

^e Heb. ix. 7.

substance? The *analogy*, that is to be observed between the *Jewish* and *christian high priest*, consists in their respective *work* and *station*. Now Christ, in his death upon the cross, without the gates of *Jerusalem*, bore no manner of *likeness*, or similitude to the *Jewish* high priest, in his ministry, within the vail. The one was naked and exposed in his painful sufferings to the insults of *Jews* and *Gentiles*: the other habited like a prince, was shut up as it were with God, in his presence chamber. It is plain we take the *former* in a wrong place, here, to find *analogy* between him and the *latter*. And if the *latter*, when within the vail, offered a *proper* sacrifice; but, Christ, in heaven, only *commemorated* a sacrifice; we shall be as much at a loss for *analogy* as before; the service of the *Jewish high-priest* not being according to, but beyond, the *example* and *shadow* of the *christian high-priest*. Wherefore as *scripture* and *analogy* are clear that the *real* and *special* sacrifice of Christ was *made in heaven*; the authority of *divines*, ancient or modern, who have an interest to serve, *viz.* to make their ministry *below*, a representation, or kind of *imagery*, of his ministry *above*; I say, the authority of these men, in asserting the offering of Christ in heaven to be only *commemorative*, must be rejected. But this is speaking more largely to the point than

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we need to do: for what sacrifice should Christ *commemorate* in heaven? He offered none on earth, *for on earth he was not a priest.*

From *this* and the preceding *Propositions* may, I think, be fairly deduced the following *Corollary*.

COROLLARY.

The priesthood of Jesus Christ is founded on the covenant of grace, and not the covenant of grace on his priesthood. If the covenant of grace had been fixed and established on the priesthood of Jesus Christ, that priesthood of his must, to say no more, in the order of nature have preceded the covenant. But the priesthood of Christ did not commence till his resurrection from the dead, and the exercise of it is confined to heaven: Whereas the covenant of grace was published and confirmed by him on earth: Therefore the priesthood of Jesus Christ is subsequent to, and founded on the covenant, and not the covenant of grace on his priesthood.

To make myself intelligible to the reader in this matter, by the *covenant of grace*, I understand the *new* covenant, or *gospel*; in which, among several truths and duties taught and enjoined, forgiveness of sins and everlasting life are promised. It is called a

new

new covenant, and stands directly opposed to that which was made with the *Israelites* in the wilderness; when *Moses* told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, *All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do*^p. This covenant being in its own nature *imperfect* and *defective*^q; some better things were, by the prophet *Jeremiah*^r, predicted and promised, under the character of a *new covenant*, to wit, *a system of rational religion, founded on the true knowledge of God; forgiveness of sins, and an everlasting inheritance.*

Our author seems to place these two covenants in *opposition*; not only because the one succeeded, and superseded the other, as a rule of life and manners; but for that he also observed in them something analogous to each other. What that was, I take to be in short, this. They were each dedicated, or ratified and confirmed in blood, and had a priesthood subsequent to, and founded on them. Let us a little consider this matter. In confirmation of the *new covenant*, *Jesus* shed his blood. Be it here observed, that, before they that were called to inherit the promises of pardon and eternal life could be put in possession of them, 'twas necessary the death of *Christ* should intervene, with such circumstances, as

^p Exod. xxiv. 3. ^q Heb. viii. 7. ^r Chap. xxxi. 31.

might be a sufficient proof and evidence, not only of his sincerity, but, that he had power given unto him of God, to give such good things unto them. This brought the new covenant, in respect to Jesus, its mediator, and to those who are called, or mentioned therein as, *heirs*, somewhat under the notion of a *testament*, or nature of a *will*. This may throw sufficient light, perhaps, to discover the sense of our author in the following passage. *And for this cause, viz. shedding his blood, he is most eminently the mediator of the new covenant, that, or inasmuch as by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, they which are called, might, with a plenary and full pardon, which the law of Moses could not give, receive the promise of eternal inheritance.* [It is here as in a *will* or *testament*]. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth^s.* Upon this account then, the death of Christ was necessary, viz. to confirm the covenant, to give force and strength to it, that they, who are called to inherit the promises, might receive and possess them, as valid and incontestible. Accordingly, we find Jesus

^s Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17.

himself

himself in the institution of his supper, in memory of his death, saying, of the cup, *This is the new covenant in my blood*¹.

As for the *first* covenant, it did not at all partake of the nature of a *testament*, as the *second* seems to have done with relation to Christ. For its promises were temporary, and of such a nature as did not require the death of Moses to establish. Some solemn significant rite, whereby to admit its authenticity, and consecrate it, was sufficient. *Whereupon*, our author observes, *neither the first covenant was dedicated without blood. For, when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the covenant, which God hath enjoined to you*².

Both covenants, we see, had this in common, that they were dedicated, or ratified and confirmed, *in blood*. The blood of the *first* covenant was the blood of *burnt-offerings*, and *peace-offerings*, that were offered on that occasion: Not the blood of an *expiatory sacrifice*, *sin-offering* or *trespass-offering*; none such being then offered. The blood of the *new* covenant was *the blood of Christ*, its mediator, who published and ratified it *as* God's covenant, and gave force

¹ Luke xxii. 20.

² Heb. ix. 18, 19, 20.

and strength to it, in the *manner* a *testator* giveth force and strength to his *will*, viz. by *dying*, in order that it might have its full virtue and establishment in the world.

But farther : *A priesthood was subsequent to, and founded on each covenant.* The *first* covenant was made and solemnized before the *consecration* of *Aaron* to the priesthood. The tribe of *Levi* performed no ministry, on this occasion, different from the other tribes.—On this occasion, the *historian* tells us, *young men of the children of Israel* were employed, *which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord.* And *Moses* took half of the blood and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people : And they said, *All that the Lord hath said, will we do, and be obedient.* And *Moses* took the blood, he had put in basons, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, *behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words*^x. It was after this solemnity that the *Aaronical* priesthood was set up.

And, in like manner, as the *first* covenant was made, and also confirmed and dedicated in blood, before the *Aaronical* priesthood

^x Exod. xxiv. 5—9.

was erected ; so the *new and everlasting covenant* was *published*, and also *confirmed in*, and *by*, our Saviour's *blood and death*, before he was inaugurated a priest, or had entred on his ministry in the heavenly sanctuary. This is what our author appears to me to insinuate, to the notice of the *Hebrews*, in order that they might make a due estimation of the *excellency* of Christ's *priesthood* above the *Aaronical*. *But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises* : giving them to understand, that by how much one covenant excelleth the other, by so much one *priesthood* excelleth the other : By how much a *complete system* of *rational religion* is preferable to a *law of commandments contained in ordinances*, or promises of spiritual and eternal blessings are better than temporal ; by so much is the *priesthood of Christ* superior to the *levitical priesthood*. —But enough of this at present.

† Heb. viii. 6.

PROPOSITION IV.

*The offering, which Jesus made in heaven,
was Himself.*

HAVING found the *place* of Christ's ministry, we come next to the *subject matter* of his offering, which was no other than HIMSELF. This *proposition* is evident from a variety of passages in the epistle before us. *Christ by HIMSELF purged our sins*^z. *This he did once, when he offered up HIMSELF*^a. *Who through the eternal spirit offered HIMSELF without spot to God*^b. *He put away sin by the sacrifice of HIMSELF*^c. As our high priest was ordained to offer, and was HIMSELF the offering, it seems necessary that what qualified him for, and constituted him, the former, should be taken into our estimate of the latter. If so, it was *himself, clothed in a body*, that had been made up of *flesh and blood*, but now raised *incorruptible*. And his *flesh and blood*, have a regard and consideration had to them herein, being separately noted by *our author*^d as occasion required, and their significance preserved in the term, *body*^e. Not that it was a meer *bodily service*;

^z Heb. i. 3.

^a vii. 27.

^b ix. 14.

^c verse 26.

^d x. 19, 20.

^e verse 10.

no, his *soul* was engaged in the solemn act, and that principally. This is what *Isaiab* (after prophetically describing the *sufferings, death and burial of Christ*, and God's good pleasure in permitting all this to befall so *innocent and holy* a person) speaks of in the following words; *When thou shalt make his soul, or rather, as the margin has it, when his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands*^f. *He shall see of the travel of his soul, and be satisfied, fully and compleatly rewarded, &c.* It was HIMSELF, *after the power of an endless life*, and not in carnal, or mortal, circumstances. He, *through the eternal spirit, offered Himself without spot to God*. So that body and soul, all that he was or that constituted him *a priest*, constituted his offering: Thus it was a sacrifice most *rational, spiritual*, and of *intrinsic and peculiar excellence*, including all the excellencies he possessed, and all the good services HIMSELF was capable of.

COROLLARY. I.

There is something peculiar in the ministry of Christ, as well as in the place where it is exercised. He did not offer what was not

^f *Isai. liii.*

his own, or the blood of others, but *he offered up himself*. He did not come with things outward and extrinſick ; but made an oblation of his *whole ſelf*, body, ſoul and ſpirit, to God ; than which a greater ſacrifice he could not offer.

COROLLARY II.

The ſacrifice of Chriſt in heaven was a living ſacrifice. 'Twas not like the weak and beggarly elements, with which the legal prieſts were concerned ; a *dead* and *inanimate* ſubject ; it had ſpirit and life. He is a prieſt, not after the law of a carnal commandment ; but after the power of an endleſs life. And, *as* he was a prieſt, *ſo* he was a ſacrifice ; for he offered up himſelf. And it may be ſaid of Jeſus, *he was not a ſacrifice after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endleſs life.* The law admitted of *inanimate* things, which are called *offerings* ; and are diſtinguiſhed from *ſacrifices*, which were offerings made *in*, and *by*, the *blood* and *deſtruction* of *ſlain beaſts*. Chriſt's ſacrifice was not of this law ; no carnal commandment ordained him a prieſt, nor is his prieſthood regulated thereby. No wonder, therefore, if we find his ſacrifice greatly differing from the legal ſacrifices ; 'tis what we might juſtly expect. His ſacrifice was not *ſo* made, *i. e.* directly
in

in and by the death, blood and destruction of the subject : But of another fashion, *was a living, self-sacrifice* ; an offering made of himself to God, after his conquest of death, in the principle and energy of immortal life. Jesus being come a priest in indissoluble life, he, *through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God.* In this consisteth the superior virtue and excellence of his sacrifice, to those that were made under the law, by *slain* beasts. *Sin and death*, the two great reproaches of human nature, seem to have given occasion to *two special ordinances* in the *Mosaic Oeconomy* ; that wherein, *by the blood of bulls and of goats*, the great atonement was made *annually for sins* ; and that, wherein, *by the sprinkling of the ashes of the red heifer*, persons were purified who had been defiled by the dead, Numb. xix. The reason why blood was appointed, to make an atonement for the soul, is given, *viz. because the life of the flesh is in the blood*, Lev. xvii. 11. And it is a *probable conjecture*, which an *eminent* person was pleased to favour me with, that the reason why *ashes* were prescribed for the *purification of the flesh*, was, because they make the *strongest lixivium*, and, consequently, a fit emblem of purification from the taint of death. The *moral* of both seems to be this : *The nearer to life, and the farther from death, any thing is, the greater account God taketh*
of

of such things. Our author hath his eye upon *both* these expiatory services, and from them argues to the superior worth and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice in heaven. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?*

What I have here suggested, concerning our author, in this *remarkable* passage, will lead us to understand it somewhat different from those *expositors* who have thought the legal sacrifices were intended to extend no farther than to the removal of *ceremonial* or outward impurities. A *mistake*, I apprehend, which depreciates the law, and makes a greater difference in the effects of the blood of bulls and goats, and of the blood of Christ, than is warrantable from the *inspired writers*, duly compared together. Wherefore it will be no unnecessary digression, in this place, fully to state our author's argument. In order to which, I would note, (1.) That the *purification of the flesh* here mentioned, in unclean cases, that occurred by being with, or touching, a *dead body, bone, or grave*, was effected by the

2 Heb. ix. 13, 14.

sprinkling of the ashes of the heifer, and not by the blood of bulls and of goats. (2.) That *the blood of bulls and of goats*, here spoken of, was that whereby the *annual* atonement was made for *all* their sins, considered as a nation or people; at which time the *moral*, at well as *ceremonial* and *political*, guilt was removed, that had been contracted the year before. See *Levit. xvi. 30.* (3.) That our author had before spoke of the use and virtue of this blood, as that which *the high priest alone, once every year, offered for himself, and for the errors of the people, v. 7. i. e.* for all sorts of sins, except capital presumptuous ones, for which the offenders were *cut off* from the number of *Israel*, called for that reason *dead works*, in opposition to pardonable errors. (4.) That, when the use and virtue of the *ashes of the heifer* are mentioned, and joined to *the blood of bulls and goats*, as here; the use and virtue of *that* blood, as before described, must be understood and taken into our author's *argument*. Wherefore let us supply this passage with his before given sentiments, and it will run to this purpose: " For, if
 " the blood of bulls and of goats remove
 " away *sins* once a year; and the ashes of
 " an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sancti-
 " fieth to the purifying of the *flesh*; how
 " much more shall the blood of Christ,
 " who through the eternal spirit, or, in
 " the

“ the energy of immortal life, offered him-
 “ self without spot to God in heaven, purge
 “ not only your *bodies*, but your *consciences*,
 “ and these not only from *sins of ignorance*,
 “ but from *works deserving death*, and
 “ thereby ever dispose and fit you to serve
 “ the God that lives for ever.” This, it
 may be said, is allowing the legal sacrifices
 to be capable of an effect *pertaining to the*
conscience; true: Or how could *lying, false-*
swearing, fornication, and the like evils of
 a moral ⁿ nature, be atoned for by them?
 Does our author deny them to be capable of

ⁿ I here present the reader with the words of the law
 touching this point.—*If a soul sin, and commit a trespass*
against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was
delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken
away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; or have
found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and swear-
eth falsely; in any of all these that a man doth, sinning therein;
then it shall be, because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he
shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing
which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered
him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about
which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the
principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it
unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass-
offering. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the
Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimat-
ion, for a trespass-offering unto the priest. And the priest shall
make an atonement for him, before the Lord: And it shall
be forgiven him, for any thing of all that
he hath done, in trespassing therein.—*And who-*
soever lieth carnally with a woman that is a bond-maid be-
trothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom
given her;—he shall bring his trespass-offering—and the
priest shall make an atonement for him, before the Lord, for
his sin which he hath done: And the sin which he hath done,
shall be forgiven him. Levit. vi. 2—8. Chap. xix. 20, 21, 22.

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this effect? no; but that they could not make him that did the service *perfect*, as pertaining to the conscienceⁱ. They only removed *some* sins, not all; for a year, not for ever.

COROLLARY III.

The sacrifice of Christ in heaven was not a bloody sacrifice, or made in, and by, the sprinkling of blood. It was observed above, that our author draws his comparison of the priesthood and ministry of Christ in heaven, with the priesthood and ministry that was exercised in the *holy of holies* on the great day of expiation. One ground of similitude is this, *viz.* that neither the one nor the other entered their respective *holy places* without blood. But then the difference in the quality of the blood, the one being *the blood of goats and calves*, the other *his own blood*, was not greater than the difference of their ministry. *Into the second tabernacle went the high priest alone, once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.*^k He entered with the blood in a bason, and by sprinkling it with his finger towards and before the mercy seat, he made *his* offering. “The very root or essence of a sacrifice (as

ⁱ Chap. ix. 9.

^k Heb. ix. 7.

the *maxim* of the *Jews* is) lies in the *sprinkling* of the blood"^k. But Christ being come an high priest of another law and order, entered into the holy place, *not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood*^l. Though the blood of Christ, as it answers all the purposes, and far excels, the blood which *Moses* sprinkled on the altar and on the people, and which the high priest sprinkled in the holy place, is, in *allusion* thereto, called *the blood of sprinkling*^m; yet, howsoever it was shed on earth, in his sufferings and death, there was no sprinkling of it in heaven: nor can any ministration of it in that manner be conceived of, without derogating from his sacrifice and the honour of his priesthood. It would degrade his sacrifice from being a *rational, spiritual* and *intrinsic sacrifice*, and render it a *material, external one*: and it would, in this respect, level his priesthood with the *Jewish Aaronical* priesthood, which was chiefly conversant in sprinkling of blood. That Jesus brought his blood before the *divine Majesty*, and applied it to him, or sprinkled it upon his *throne* and about the court of heaven, is a low and unworthy notion. Nothing can excuse the *ingenious* author of the following

^k Patrick on Levit. xvi. ^l Heb. ix. 11. 12. ^m Chap. xii. 24.

lines, which are sung in some christian assemblies, but the *licence of poets*.

“ Rich were the drops of Jesus blood
 “ That calm’d his frowning face,
 “ That sprinkled o’er the burning throne
 “ And turn’d the wrath to grace”ⁿ.

PROPOSITION V.

It is highly probable that the time, when Jesus made his offering, was soon after his resurrection from the dead; and that the manner of it was, by way of solemn address and worship.

AS the ministry we are discoursing of, was in things *pertaining unto God*, and wholly transacted before his *glorious presence* in the *Sanctum Sanctorum* of the universe; whereof there could be no spectators or witnesses from among the children of men: like as the ministry of the *Jewish* high priest, which was not exposed when he *adumbrated* Christ; there being *no man in the tabernacle*^o, no, not any of the other priests, during that solemn service:—I say, as this was a ministry *within the veil*, and pertaining to God alone; the *precise time*

ⁿ Dr. Watts’s Hymns.

^o Levit. xvi. 17.

and *manner* is not so very material to us, nor so clearly revealed, as is the *sacrifice it self*, and the *place where* it was offered. For which reason I will not be *positive* in what I have to lay before my reader, under this *proposition*.

As it is certain Jesus could not make his offering in heaven, *soon after his resurrection*, without *first ascending thither*, my business shall be to produce, from a few passages of scripture, a *probable proof* of an *immediate ascent*.

The *first* passage I shall mention is, *John xiv. 28.* *Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father : for my Father is greater than I.* In which words Jesus reminds his disciples of a plain intimation before given them, of his *departure from*, and his *return* to them again. That this cannot be understood of his *ascension forty days after his resurrection*, and his *second advent to judge the world*, is clear from the following *verse*: *And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.* It evidently related to an event, not greatly distant, and was *foretold* that they, by its accomplishment, *might believe*. And that it cannot be understood of his *death and after appearance only*, I apprehend *first*, because the *departure* is styled a
going

going away to the Father ; which seems to denote something more than dying. Secondly, because it was such a departure as they (his disciples) might *rejoice in*. Now, tho' Jesus committed his *departing spirit* to the Father's care and protection ; yet, as there was a *disjunction* of him hereby made, his *soul* in *hades*, and his *body* in the *grave*, 'twas an event they could *not*, if they loved him, *rejoice in*. Wherefore I suppose he here intimateth that, subsequent to his *death* and *resurrection*, he should go to GOD HIS, and THEIR, FATHER, (which was a matter of *consequence* both to himself and them ;) after which he would *come again* unto them. What less do the words import ? *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto THE FATHER : for my Father is greater than I.* Might not this be to *prepare a place for them*, by carrying in his own person *that nature* he had laid hold of, *into heaven*, and then coming and bringing them a token and pledge of it ?

Another passage is Chap. xvi. 16. *A little while, and ye shall not see me : and again, a little while, and ye shall see me ; because I go to THE FATHER.* In which words are implied, that, for a *little while*, Jesus would be *absent* from them—that for a *little while* he would be *present with them again*—that the reason of *both* a little while *absent*, and

and again a little while present, was, *because of his going to the Father* : For thus I apprehend the words may be read. *A little while and ye shall not see me, because I go to the Father : and again [tho' but for] a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father* : and that the following verse will justify it. *Then said some of his disciples among themselves, what is this that he saith unto us ? A little while and ye shall not see me : and again a little while and ye shall see me : and, because I go to the Father ?* All I shall observe here is, (taking it for granted that *GOING TO THE FATHER* denotes more than his *death* ;) that, if *going to the Father* denoteth the *ascension* and *advancement* of the *son of man* in heaven ; his *ascension* and *advancement* took place in that *interval* of time, or *little while*, during his *absence* from, and *before* his *appearance* to the disciples after his resurrection.

But we may get farther light from chap. xx. 17, *Jesus saith to her, Touch me not ; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ASCEND UNTO MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER, AND TO MY GOD AND YOUR GOD.* In which words we have a *prohibition* given to *Mary Magdalen*, to whom he first appeared after his resurrection, *to touch him*. 'Tis no wonder if she, who formerly *washed his feet with her tears*, and
wiped

wiped them with the hair of her head, attempted to express her duty and affection by some such action, when she beheld him risen from the dead. But whatever the ceremony was, Jesus forbid it, *touch me not.*—We have the *reason* assigned for this prohibition; *for I am not yet ascended to my Father.* There was no such prohibition in the evening, when Jesus appeared to the eleven, and them that were with them, and said, *handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And he shewed them his hands and his feet^p.* If he was not immediately to ascend, why might not Mary touch, hold, or embrace him, in the morning, as well as the disciples in the evening? And wherefore is this *reason* assigned, *for I am not yet ascended?*—We have farther, a *message* given to Mary: *But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.* As Mary was not now indulged the liberty she sought, 'tis probable *this appearance* of Jesus was *in order to give her this message*, rather than afford her an occasion to experience the truth of his resurrection. And if he was not *immediately to ascend*, why was this special message given in charge to her? and why this *transitory* appearance? Jesus had told his disci-

^p Luke xxiv. 39, 40.

ples frequently before his passion, he should shortly go to the Father ; and if he did not go till the end of forty days after his resurrection, to what purpose was Mary sent with this embassy ? Say, it was to refresh their minds : I answer, could not Jesus have refreshed their minds with this himself, when he appeared to them in the evening ? But, (and what is very remarkable) though Jesus spake much to them before his passion, of his going to the Father, and now immediately after his resurrection, appears to Mary, and commissions her to tell the disciples that he was going ; he never after this, at any of the several visits he made to them, says a word of it as of a thing still future.

There is great reason to presume that every appearance of Jesus to his disciples beside that in Galilee, was sudden and unexpected. He promised, before his passion, he would meet them there, when he should be risen from the dead^a. And at his resurrection both the Angels and Jesus himself, reminds them, that they go into Galilee, and there they should see him. Now as his appearance to them in Galilee was not, perhaps, within a fortnight or three weeks after his resurrection, and they were not apprized of having any other visit, or of seeing him any where else ; the words to Mary do

^a Math. xxvi. 32. Mark xiv. 28.

not seem capable, by any *art of criticism*, of the following *construction* which a *great man* has laboured to give them. "As for thee, thou needest not to be solicitous to touch or hold me now, thou wilt have time sufficient to converse with me, and experiment the truth of my resurrection; for I shall not immediately ascend, but stay some time with you here on earth."

'Tis surprizing to me to find so great a man as Dr. *Whitby*, who "was once inclined from these words to think, that as the sacrifice was not only to be slain, but the blood was to be brought into the *sanctuary*, and there presented before God, to obtain the remission of sins; so Christ here intimated, that having offered up His body to the death, he, to compleat his *priestly office*, and procure the full pardon of our sins, was immediately to ascend into the heavenly sanctuary, to present there his blood before God: For why else doth he say, *bold*, or *detain me not*, for I have not yet *ascended*? Why doth he add these words, *go, tell my disciples, I ascend*?" I say, I am surprized to find the *Doctor* give up so *judicious* a thought in fear, as it were, of *novelty*, "because no *commentator*, antient or modern, ever thought of such a thing" as an *immediate ascent* of our Lord after his *resurrection*. As Jesus himself hath so plainly *hinted* the thing, no matter what *commentators*

tors have thought. Jesus now entered on his exalted state, was declared to be *the son of God with power, Lord and head of the church* which he had purchased, and as such, was *inaugurated a priest for ever.* See Prop. II. Now the nature and reason of things may lead one to imagine, that He soon waited on his God and Father, and was not long ordained a priest, before he had somewhat to offer to him that appointed him. As it was a work, it must have its time; and what time more proper than immediately after his installment? And, indeed, in this view, the words have a beauty and propriety: “*Touch me not, I have not time to receive your compliments, or gratify your curiosity, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, to perform my duty and your service on this occasion. But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; where I told them it was expedient for them that I should go; and possibly that may remind them of my frequent saying, I go away and come again unto you.*” But, if we follow the learned Doctor’s paraphrase, “*Touch me not, I spend not now thy time in touching my body; for I am not yet ascended, I shall not presently ascend to my Father: But go first to my brethren, and say unto them, I am shortly to ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God, to*

"do for you the things of which I spake,
 "Chap. xiv. 16." How jejune and forc'd
 do the words appear?

The next passage observable, is, verses 21, 22, 23. of the same chapter. *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And, when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* Now, though this form of salutation, *Peace be to you*, was the same, which Jesus taught his disciples to use, when he sent them out to *preach the gospel*^r; yet his redoubling of it to them *twice*, at the time of his first appearance to them together, may lead one to imagine its being occasioned by his having *presented himself to*, and been *accepted by, the Father*, and thereby settled a *lasting ground of peace*. Supposing this to have been the case (to speak in the *levitical* language) that he had *entered into the holy place*, and made *reconciliation for sins*, and now shewed himself to them in token thereof; as the high priest under the law shewed himself to the people, who waited with some kind of impatience for his appearing, in order to satisfy them that he had performed the *holy rites* in an accepta-

ble manner ;—I say, supposing this to be the case, how *apposite* is this *salutation*, and the *repetition* thereof? But, not to lay any stress on this; we are told, *Chap. vii. 39. that the Holy Ghost was not yet given*, i. e. (as appears by the *context*) his *disciples* did not then apprehend what the *Scripture* hath said concerning him; *because that Jesus was not yet glorified*. But now, *the Holy Ghost was given*. Jesus *breathed on them, and saith to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost*: i. e. as explained by *St. Luke xxiv. 45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures*: Therefore Jesus was now glorified. And, if his ascension into heaven was his entrance into glory, his ascension preceded the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The next passage we shall mention, is *Matth. xxviii. 18. And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, &c.* These words seem evidently declarative of the exaltation, dominion and authority of our Lord; and do, I think, suppose and imply, *his having ascended into heaven*, when and where he was invested with *all power* by the Father. For, if he had not yet ascended, how was it that *all power in heaven was given unto him*? And, if he had not yet ascended, what more glory could he receive, when he did ascend? He had, it seems, *all power given to him in hea-*

ven and earth ; more than which could not be given, or he receive. And, if the words do denote the compleat exaltation, dominion, and authority of our Lord ; this exaltation pre-supposes his offering made, and God's acceptance thereof.

Another passage is that of *our author to the Hebrews*, Chap. i. 3. *Who, when he had by Himself (or by the offering up of Himself, Chap. vii. 27.) purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* In which is contained this *principle*, that the offering of Christ in heaven preceded his glorious session. *When he had purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of God ; and not before.*

It may, perhaps, be asked, “ does not this last mentioned *text* destroy the notion of an ascent of Jesus to heaven, before that recorded in the *1st Chapter of the Acts*, when *after—the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God?* Is sitting at the right hand of God consistent with the appearances of Jesus on earth? And did he *frequently ascend and descend?*”

In answer to which it may be said, that the terms, whereby this article of Christ's *sitting at the Father's right hand*, is expressed, are of the *figurative* sort ; and not to be understood, as circumscribing the

Almighty, who is an immense and pure Spirit, without bodily parts and organs ; nor to represent Jesus in a *posture of rest and inaction*. The words must be taken *metaphorically* ; and, in that sense, they convey to us a most sublime idea of the *dominion, power, and glory*, whereto Jesus is exalted by the Father. Now, what our author here says, as likewise in another part of this epistle, that *this Man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God*¹ ; is very consistent with his appearances on earth. For, as we have above seen, he had *all power given to him in heaven and earth*, at the time of those appearances ; and can *sitting at the right hand of God*, denote more ? Again, can it be thought with any propriety, that *forty days* intervened between *the sufferings and glory of Christ* ? Himself seems to suppose the one succeeding the other, without any such intervention². Again, if that, *during the space of forty days*, he did not ascend to heaven, how did he dispose of himself ? During that time, his visits were but seldom, chiefly on the *first day of each week*. According to the largest computation I have seen, his *appearances* are reckoned but *eleven* ; five of which are supposed to have been made on *the day of his resurrection*, i. e. *three in the morning, and two in the even-*

¹ chap. x. 12.

² Luke xxiv. 26.

ing. Can it be thought our Lord *bid* himself the remainder of the time; or that he travelled about *unknown*, to preach his own gospel? If these questions are called *impertinent*, they are, however, occasioned by a *weak supposition*. For, *somewhere* Jesus must be, either in this world or another. And *where*, with any propriety, can we think he should be, when he left his disciples, but *with his Father*? That his transient visits on earth were not *inconsistent* with his *session in glory*, is evident from that *appearance*, which he made above a *twelve month* after the *ascension*, recorded in *the Acts*, in order to *convert Saul*, and constitute him an *Apostle*, and a witness of his resurrection*.

These are the passages of scripture which seem to afford a *probable proof* of an *immediate ascent* of Jesus to heaven after his resurrection; when he made that *presentment*, or *tender*, of HIMSELF to his Father, which

* Acts ix. 1 Cor. ix. 1. xv. 8.

† As I knew nothing of Mr. Whiston's *Essay upon the several Ascensions of Christ*, till since this was written for the press, I have a pleasure to find my thoughts, on most of these passages, similar to his. There is one objection to the several ascensions of Christ, taken from Heb. ix. 12. *By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place*: Which he has effectually answered. The high priest went *once every year*, i. e. (saith he) "He entered in but upon *one day* in the year into "the most holy place, which is the *apostle's* meaning here "by *once*; tho' he *four* several times that day entered "thereinto." But that St. Luke, Chap. xxiv. and Acts i. speaketh of *two different ascensions*, as Mr. Whiston thinks, I cannot grant: Nor does it appear, to me, that any but what is called the *final ascension* of our Lord, was *visible* to his disciples.

vid. Claggett
Confutation
of Whiston.

we call *his offering*, or *sacrifice*. I have but *one* more to subjoin, and that I think will shew that the *manner* of it was, *by way of solemn address and worship*.

Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body thou hast fitted me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.

I am sensible that very great and learned men do understand these words of Christ's *assumption of the human nature* and his being born into the world in it; and have considered them as spoken by him *before his coming*, and with relation to it. But that they relate to his *priestly character and function*, is, I think, apparent upon *two* accounts, which I submit to my reader's judgment. *First*, It is of *Christ*, in the *new state*, our author chiefly and principally *treateth* in this *epistle*; and not of *Christ* in the *Jewish state* or present world. It seems only as *preparatory* to the *new*—he taketh any notice of him in the *old*. And it is certain, in another place, where he speaks of Christ's *coming*, or *being brought into the world*, he doth not mean his *incarnation* and first appearance in flesh, when he entered on the stage of human life, and was made under the law; but of his entering
I into

into that new dispensation of things, call'd the *future age*, or the *world to come*, which bore date from his *resurrection*; when his dominion was established over the Angels, and they, by whose ministry the law itself was given, were required to pay him homage:—thus we read, chap. i. 6. *When he brings again the first begotten from the dead into the world^z, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.* Add to this, chap. ii. 5. *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak*: and, I think, it will make it *probable* that, by the *world*, here, the *new state*, or *world to come*, is intended. And, if this be true, it gives us the fix'd, determinate time, when the words were spoken, or are supposed to be spoke, by Christ, *viz. at his entrance into the new-made world*: wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, &c.

Secondly, The connection and scope of the words do most naturally lead one to apply them to Christ, in his *sacerdotal* capacity and office. Our author in the foregoing part of his *epistle*, had described Jesus to be a *minister of holy things in the true tabernacle*, the *holy place not made with hands*, which the *Jewish tabernacle* and *high priest who officiated therein once a year*, served

^z Vid. *Whitby* in *loc.*

to adumbrate; being only a *copy* of a *pattern* shewn to *Moses* in the *mount*^a, not the *pattern* itself, much less the *original*, and consequently in comparison thereof, a remote and distant figure, or meer *shadow*. And, having spoke of the *perfection* of Christ's ministry and sacrifice in heaven^b, he proceeds to shew the *weakness* and *insufficiency* of *these shadows*; that what they did, and what they offered, *could not possibly take away sins for ever*^c. Now, after this representation, is it natural to imagine that our author should run back to the *incarnation* of Christ, and speak of that, or in relation thereto, in those very terms, by which he had before ushered him into the *new world*, in the quality of *our great high priest* and *Lord*? I rather think, he prosecutes his subject; and, from observing that *it was not possible for the blood of bulls and of goats*, which the *Aaronical* priests offered, *to take away sins*; he proceeds to shew the *excellent* and *effectual* ministry of Christ in the *heavenly sanctuary* to that end. And this he describes, in the words before us. *Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body thou hast sitted me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, lo, I come (in the*

^a Chap. viii. 5. ^b Chap. ix. 25, 26. ^c Chap. x. 1, 2, 3.

volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. And to make it still more evident, that this relateth to Christ's *sacerdotal ministry*, our author adds, *verse 10. By the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all. i. e.* This presentation, or tender, here made of himself in our *likeness*, fashion or habit, as *man*, to the *divine will*, has effectually sanctified, both as to *body* and *mind*, all who worship God through him. As for *verse 8, 9.* I apprehend they should be read in a *parenthesis*, in which our author considers the words, as uttered by *David*, and applies them to his purpose, *viz.* to shew that *David himself* was convinced of the *insufficiency* of the *legal sacrifices*, and did in effect, *take them away*, that he might establish obedience to the *divine will*, in some farther appointments.

After such great encomiums on Christ's ministry, and so many particulars in relation to it, as had been given them, it was natural for the *Hebrews* to enquire, *how the service was performed, and what passed on the occasion?* "You have told us Christ is a great high priest for us in heaven, and hath, by the offering up of himself, done that which the legal priesthood and sacrifices could not do: *How, and in what manner* did he make his offering"? I suppose our author, aware of *this*, provideth for their satisfaction herein, by borrowing the words
of

of a *great king* and *prophet* of *their own nation*, and putting them, with a little variation, into the mouth of our Lord. There is no passage in the whole *Jewish writings* more beautiful and apt to the design and and scope of our author's *argument*, nor perhaps better suited to give one an *idea* of that *grand transaction*. Not to repeat what has been already said under PROP. IV. COROL. I, II, III. to which I refer the reader: let me here *observe*, that God was now to establish a *spiritual worship*, under Jesus the *great high priest*: wherefore, when he came to present himself in this character *before the throne* and make *his offering*, it must undoubtedly be conceived of, as a *rational service*, an act of the *sublimest worship*. I will suppose it to be thus—When he was brought again from the dead, and entered into the *heavenly sanctuary* before the *throne of the Majesty on high*, he said, “ *sacrifice and offering* have not sufficiently “ *discovered thy regard* to mankind; and “ *therefore thou wouldest not* continue them “ *any longer; but hast fitted me with a body* “ *for that discovery.* In *burnt offerings* and “ *sacrifices for sin*, which they have offered, “ *thou hast had no pleasure*, in comparison “ *of obedience and moral virtue.* Then “ *said I, lo, I come*, (what I have hitherto “ *done is on record, in the volume of the* “ *book it is written of me;*) what farther “ *service*

“ service thou hast in this my immortal state
 “ for thy glory and their perfection, I give
 “ myself up *to do thy will, O my God!*”

If I have hit on the true sense of these passages of scripture, they throw some considerable light on the *subject*:—However, the reader will please to remember I state the PROPOSITION as *probable* only. If the magnificent pomp, with which Jesus was conducted into heaven, the *obeisance* he made, and the very words he uttered, on the *presentment* of *himself* before the *excellent* glory, had been more clearly and fully revealed to us than they are; I do not know that it would answer any more than a *speculative* use. The high priest's *fidelity* in, and God's *acceptance of, the service*, was what the *Jewish* church chiefly adverted to: and Christ's having *accomplished the service of God to our salvation*, is the grand important point, whether we have hit on the *precise time*, or have the *ceremony* exactly described to us or not.

PROPOSITION VI.

The offering of Jesus Christ in heaven is fitly stiled an expiatory or atoning sacrifice.

INOW come to speak somewhat concerning the *nature* of Christ's sacrifice. And, without entring into any curious *enquiry* about the *origin* of sacrifices, it is certain, from *revelation*, that God approved of the practice. In the worship himself prescribed to the *Jews*, various sorts and kinds are mentioned; such as the *burnt-offering*, the *peace-offering*, and the *sin*, or *trespass-offering*. These were all *religious acts of acknowledgment*. The *burnt-offering* was an acknowledgment of God, as the *creator* and *governor* of the world: the *peace-offering*, of *particular favours* and *benefits* received from him; and the *sin* or *trespass-offering*, of *sins* committed against him, either wilfully or through ignorance. 'Tis those of the last denomination, which relate to our present subject.

The *sin* or *trespass-offering* (for here we have no need to distinguish them) as it supposed the person who *voluntarily* brought it, in a state of *penitence*, truly sensible of his *guilt*, of which he made *confession* when

when he *laid his hands on the head of the sacrifice*; so it supposed God *propitious* who ordained the service. 'Tis plain, it was not to be *substituted* in the room of *moral virtue*, but was rather intended to cherish and promote moral virtue. For a *conscious sense*, and an *ingenuous acknowledgment of trespasses*, was not only hereby *encouraged*; but, where the trespass was a matter of *fraud, restitution and satisfaction* to the *injured person* was made *previously necessary* to it. And, as it was, not to take place, or be in the *stead*, of moral virtue, 'tis no less evident the service was not to *make God propitious*, or to *cause* a disposition he had not before. The institution was *his*, having his *approbation and warrant*, which could not arise but from his great condescension, and goodness.

If it be ask'd, "whether God might not as well have pardoned the *penitent Jews*, without prescribing any such rites"? the solution hereof seems to depend on another question, *namely*, "whether, as a *nation or body-politick*, he could not as well have governed them, without institutions of an outward and visible kind?" I think the *negative* is plain. God was *their king and sovereign*. He formed them into a *people*, and was considered as *locally present* with them. As he was their *law-giver*, every trespass partook of the nature of moral evil,

being a violation of truth ; an act of disobedience to his will and rightful *authority*. The *honour* of the *divine rectitude* was, therefore, evidently interested in this *polity*, and was as necessary to be regarded on the one hand, as the *good of the people* on the other. In regard to *both*, it was fit and necessary, *vice* and *impurity* should be discountenanced *publicly*. And in this view, that *method* was fittest and best that *secured* the *divine holiness*, and *exposed sin*, whilst it exhibited an *act of grace*. To this *end*, these sacrifices seem to have been introduced into this constitution. And as no state can well subsist, without *particular laws* ; so no wise legislature ever thought the *penitence* of offenders a sufficient reason to dispense with their execution.

That these sacrifices were *expiatory*, is clear and plain both from the *old* and *new testament* : and that they were appointed for the expiation of *moral* as well as *ceremonial* and *political* guilt, see what has been said under PROP. IV. COROL. II. *How* and *in what sense* they expiated ; is an *enquiry* necessary to our present subject.—And without difficulty I suppose it will be granted, that the expiatory quality, or virtue, to *atone* for sin, lay not in the *nature* of the things sacrificed. What amends for the violation of his laws, can there be in giving to God a costly sacrifice ? *Will he eat the flesh of bulls, and drink the blood of goats* ? If, absurd as it is, that

was the case, *is not the world his, and the fulness thereof?* In respect to any *secret genuine virtue or worth*, the *blood of bulls and of goats* never took away sins at all; and it is impossible it should.

But, it may be asked, “how then did *the blood of bulls and of goats* take away several particular sins, recited in the law, and procure, for the nation in general, an *annual atonement?*” I answer, not from any aptitude, or fitness *in the blood*, or the *sprinkling* thereof; but by God’s *ordination and appointment* of it to that purpose. The *whole* was a mere *ceremony*, and derived *all* its efficacy from a *positive* command. Tho’ the priest *did* hereby *make an atonement*; God’s gracious appointment and acceptance *alone* render’d it significant and available.

It may be farther asked, “whether these sacrifices had not a *typical nature*, or *pre-figuration*, in them, of the *sacrifice of Jesus Christ*; and did not from *thence* derive an *atonement virtue?*” I answer in the *negative*.

That the law had a *figure* of things future, a *shadow of good things to come*^a, is certain. But, where lay this figure or shadow? Not in the *places*, or *positive observances*, which the law prescribed; but in the *uses* they were appointed to. Thus the *inner tabernacle*

^a Heb. ix. 8, 9. Chap. x. 1.

was a shadow of heaven; not from the building itself, but from the residence of the *Shechinah*, or cloud of glory, therein. So the ceremonies of divine worship were shadows of the worship of God, through Christ, not from any similitude, or likeness, they bore thereto; otherwise than their being God's appointed means, under that *oeconomy*, of dispensing his favours to the worshippers. And, if any should say, "that the holy Ghost, in
" and by the legal prescriptions, taught
" those, who were pious and wise, to expect some future greater good things;" I see no reason to contradict them. *This*, it is certain, the holy Ghost signified, whether any attended to it or not, that, as long as that particular constitution, or way of worship lasted, they were in a state of imperfect absolution, and excluded the nearest access that might be to God, the high priest alone in his annual service excepted. But that every legal rite prefigured some Christian mystery, is, I apprehend, very deservedly exploded. An eminent Divine*, to whom I am particularly obliged for any just conception I have of these matters, saith, after mentioning *Heb. x. 1. Col. ii. 7. Heb. viii.* "From these and such like general expressions, some, mistaking the

* Dr. Sykes's *Essay upon the truth of the Christian Religion.* p. 185, 186.

“ design of the Apostle in this sort of com-
“ parisons, have asserted that all the *Mosaic*
“ rites were *types* of, or were designed to
“ *prefignify* future events; and that the
“ Gospel is to be found in the *Pentateuch*.
“ An inference as wide from the Apostle’s
“ argument as is possible! his intent was
“ all along to shew the great *advantage* of
“ the Gospel over the law of *Moses*; and in
“ order to this he had instanced in several
“ *particulars*, in every one of which Chri-
“ stianity had the *advantage*, as much as
“ the *substance* has the pre-eminence above a
“ *shadow*. They were all, if compared
“ with the gospel-state of things, mere
“ *trifles*. If, *the shadow of things to come*,
“ signifies, *a prefiguration of future events*,
“ *which* are those events in christianity, to
“ which the *Jewish new-moons*, Col. ii. 16.
“ or the *Jewish meats and drinks* have a re-
“ spect? or how did the law of *Moses* made
“ up of commands about *persons, times, places*,
“ and *sacrifices*, *prefigure* a dispensation,
“ where regard to *sacrifices, holy persons*,
“ *times*, and *places*, are so far from being
“ any ways eminently enjoined, that they
“ are all declared, in effect, useless? Can a
“ *particular holy place* in the law be design-
“ ed as a prefiguration of a state, where *all*
“ places are *equally* holy, and a service
“ offered up *in spirit and in truth* in *all*
“ places is declared acceptable? The law
“ therefore

“ therefore is declared to have so little of the
“ gospel in it, that it was a perfect mere
“ shadow, without any of the *truth* of things
“ in it; *vid.* John i. 17. cap. iv. 24.”

And again :

“ There is no one thing has made the *New*
“ *Testament* the subject of ridicule to *Jews* and
“ *Infidels*, so much as the absurd inferences
“ which Christians usually have drawn from
“ passages, which visibly contain not one
“ tittle of what is pretended : Nor is it pos-
“ sible to conceive what real *injury* this has
“ done to the cause of Christianity. To
“ see the most glaring and eminent follies
“ and weaknesses of men sanctified by di-
“ vine words, and vended as important
“ truths, or put upon the world as the re-
“ velation of God, is entirely to alienate
“ men’s minds from *truth*, and to make
“ them take refuge in any thing, rather
“ than in the *books* of *divine wisdom*.”

If the reader is yet unwilling to part with
the *legal*, *expiatory sacrifices*, as *types* of
Christ, let him please to consider, that, in
order to constitute a *type*, a *divine warrant*,
as well as *analogy*, are necessary. Now,
when were such sacrifices *appointed* to be
types? To say, they had from the *beginning*
a mystical shadow, or prefiguration, of
Christ, in them, is *begging the question*. We

are not certain, as to the *origin* of sacrifices in general, whether it was *divine*, or of *human invention* only; much less that God ordained these in particular to be types of Christ. On supposition that they were *from the beginning typical* of him, I ask, must not the "*pagan sacrifices*, which appear to have been little else but the *patriarchal*," be *mystical* too; and *prefigure* by their *slain beasts*, Christ *to be slain*? If so, may it not be said, *that unto them was the gospel preached*, as well as to the *Jews* and *patriarchal fathers*? But this, I doubt, will make *strange typical divinity*. Or, if it be said, these sacrifices were *appointed to be types*, at the time when they were *prescribed to the Jews*; proof, if there be any, may easily be made appear. But where, in the *law* or the *prophets*, shall we find it? For my own part, I have not been able to discover any *hint* of that kind in the *law of Moses*: And, as for the *prophets*, one of them declares that God had, comparatively speaking, no concern in the *institution* of sacrifices; which 'tis not probable he would have done, were they *prefigurations*, and *prophetical* of the *sacrifice of Christ*. Thus saith the Lord,—*For I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices,*

^a *Definition of sacrifices*, page 3.

Jer. vii. 21, 22. And it has been observed, by several learned men, that the passages directing sacrifices, *Levit. i. 2. and ii. 1.* are rather a *permission*, than any *express* and *positive command* of those things. The author to the *Hebrews* discovers no notion of their having any such relation, or primary design, to *typify* and *prefigure* Jesus Christ, but, on the contrary, treats them as *carnal ordinances*, imposed until the time of reformation^b. Nor will *analogy*, or *resemblance*, in these sacrifices, to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, appear more evident to make them *types*, than doth a *divine warrant*. Let us pursue this *mystical shadow*; perhaps we shall find it no where exists, but in the wild fancies and imaginations of men. We have this *principle* grantedⁱ, to take with us, “that, in a *type*, there is some *outward and sensible thing* necessary, in order to make the *representation*, or *adumbration*.” Now where lieth the *adumbrating figure* of Christ’s sacrifice, in the *legal expiations*? It must, I think, be either in the *subject* sacrificed, or in the *manner* and *action* of performing it. I will suppose my reader to have a better taste than to be entertained with *idle conceits*; and therefore, without enquiring whether there be any *likeness*, and *what*, in a *bullock*, a *goat*, a

^b Chap. ix. 10.

ⁱ Mather on Types.

lamb, a dove, a pigeon, to the blessed Jesus; all which the law appointed for atoning sacrifices; I will take it for granted, that the type, or adumbrating figure, lay in the blood and death of the subject. For, though a lamb, a dove, a pigeon, are emblems of meekness and innocence; virtues conspicuous in our Lord; it will by no means follow that these were therefore typical of him in sacrifice. Nor will his being called the Lamb of God, and the slain Lamb, be proof sufficient that Lambs in sacrifice were typical of him, without confining the type to that subject only: For where is he called a Bullock, a Goat, or a Pigeon? I say, I will take it for granted that the adumbrating figure lay in the blood and death of the subject. But here we are reduced to another dilemma, namely, that every atoning sacrifice was not made in blood and death, and, consequently, was not typical of Christ's sacrifice. I have here in view the inanimate sacrifice, the poor man's sin-offering, which was the tenth part of an epha of fine flour. Levit. v. 11—13. But, if he be not able to bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons; then he that sinned, shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an epha of fine flour for a sin-offering; he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon: for it is a sin-offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him, as touching the sin that he hath sinned,
and

and it shall be forgiven him. Now, if the outward and visible sign prefiguring, was *the blood and death of the subject*; this sacrifice, being destitute of blood and death, could not prefigure the sacrifice of Christ. And, if atonement was made by a sacrifice that had no typical respect to Christ, (for the *priest's taking and burning his handful of the meal*, will make as poor a figure for the purpose, as the *millers grinding and dressing it*) it is plain its atoning force and virtue must be derived elsewhere: For it could not arise from a relation it had not. And, if *atonement was made*, where *no blood*, nor any *respect to blood*, was; we may conclude, that *the atoning virtue in those offerings, where was blood, lay not in the blood, nor in any thing peculiarly adumbrated thereby.*

By the way; what has been above said may assist us to understand our author in the following passage. *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and ^k without shedding of blood is no remission¹.* If the last clause be extended to the law of sin-offerings in general, it is not true: For, without shedding of blood, there *was remission*. The priest made an atonement for the poor man, as touching the sin that

^k A person of great *abilities* is pleased to inform me, that the word *almost* should here be repeated.—*And almost without shedding of blood is no remission.*

¹ Chap. ix. 22.

he had sinned, and it was forgiven him, even where no blood was shed, or to be shed. But, if it be restrained to the particular service, the law prescribed, for a *national expiation*, there it will hold; *without shedding of blood*, on that solemn, publick occasion, was *no remission*. The first clause evidently relates to the common, personal, expiatory sacrifices; and the *almost*, is designed to except the *poor*, whose offences the law did not require to be *purged with blood*; the burning of a little *fine flour* cleansed as well. The passage is plainly relative to what our author had spoken, several *verses* before, touching the daily and annual services for sin, performed by the priests, which was chiefly in blood; and has no connection with the immediately preceding account of Moses, of his dedicating the *covenant*, the *tabernacle*, and all the *vessels of the ministry*, for these were *all* sprinkled with blood. But to return;

I have here supposed the notion of Christ's *sacrifice*, as made directly in *blood* and *death*, to be true: And, if it be exceeding difficult, if not impossible, to find even *that* prefigured by the *victims* of old; what of a typical respect will they bear to *his sacrifice*, when it is considered rightly as *a living one*? Let the reader turn to *Prop. IV. Corol. II, III.* and the *mystical shadow* will vanish and fly away.

Enough,

Enough, I apprehend, has been said to shew wherein the atoning virtue of the legal sacrifices lay; not in themselves, nor in any typical relation they bore, but *solely* in God's positive appointment of them. And from hence we may easily collect the reason why, or upon what account, they were called *expiatory*, or *propitiatory*. Not because of any inherent quality they had, to affect the Almighty, excite and draw forth compassion, and *dispose him* to mercy; nor from any intrinsic worth and excellency in them, to *compensate*, make *amends*, or *satisfy*, for the offence committed: But *because* they were the *public established means, whereby the penitent sinner might come nigh unto God, and be absolved*. That might well be called an *expiatory*, or *atoning* sacrifice, in which grace was peculiarly exhibited, the offender *justified* or forgiven, and admitted into a state of *peace and reconciliation*. When I say it may well be so called, I mean in a *secondary* and less proper sense; as when we ascribe to *means* and *instruments*, what we receive in, and by, their use. But there's another reason, perhaps, for ascribing the terms *propitiation*, *atonement*, &c. to these sacrifices, namely, the general sentiments of the *beathen* world, that the gods were to be *appeased* by them. The low and unworthy notions of the divine nature, into which the bulk of mankind had fallen,

easily led them to ascribe an undue efficacy to these acts of religion, and to believe they satisfied, or made atonement, for sins. “ A
 “ certain apprehension and persuasion, faith
 “ *Archbishop Tillotson* ^m, had very early and
 “ universally obtained among mankind, concerning the expiation of sin, and appeasing the offended deity, by sacrifices : By
 “ the sacrifices of living creatures, of birds
 “ and beasts ; and afterwards by human
 “ sacrifices, and *the blood of their sons and*
 “ *daughters* : By offering unto God, as the
 “ expression is in the *prophet*, *their first born*
 “ *for their transgression, and the fruit of*
 “ *their body for the sin of their souls.*” And, if what he intimates is true, as indeed it seems to be, that “ a very great part of the
 “ Jewish religion was instituted of God, in
 “ plain condescension to the general apprehension of mankind, concerning this way
 “ of appeasing the offended deity by sacrifices ;” there is ground to think that the *sin*, or *trespass-offering*, was peculiarly intended to be the *mean of restoring offenders*, in cases not *capital*, to that favour and friendship with God, which the *pagan* sacrifices only attempted to effect. The *Jews* had those very advantages by the *law*, which the *Gentiles*, without it, sought for in vain. And if *their* sacrifices were called

^m *Sermon concerning the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ.*

expiatory, which had nothing but *antiquity*, *superstition*, and *will-worship* to support the practice of; more properly might *these* of the *Jews* be so called, which were adopted, of God himself, into their religion, and made the means to dispense his pardon by, for many failures of duty.

When, therefore, we read of *expiating guilt by sacrifices*, as was commonly and ordinarily done, for *private persons*, in sundry cases; or, that *the high priest entered into the holy place within the veil*, and there *made an atonement for the children of Israel* in general, *for all their sins once a year*, as the Lord commanded *Moses*, *Levit. xvi.* we are not to imagine that, by any thing *done* or *offered*, the Almighty was appeased, his anger and wrath qualified, and allayed, by an *equivalent*, or any thing pointing thereto, and thereby *made propitious and kind*. Tho' without shedding of blood, on this *public anniversary*, was no remission; yet remission was not obtained of God, by any effect, or virtue, that the blood, or the ministration of it, had on him. An atonement, or expiation, in this strict and rigid sense, sacrifices neither were nor could be. They were mere ceremonies; and derived their worth from a positive institution. Thus, on the great day of atonement, the priest, properly habited, first entered with a censer of *coals* and *sweet incense*, which he
burnt,

burnt, either by way of perfume, to prepare the place for the divine *Majesty*, or to raise a cloud of smoke that might veil or obscure the piercing brightness of the *glory* which appeared on the *mercy seat*; and then taking the *blood of the bullock and goat*, he brought it in, and sprinkled it with his finger *once* towards the top of the *mercy seat*, and before the *mercy seat* *seven* times. What was the *moral* of all this, but that, notwithstanding the perfect rectitude and holiness of God, he was disposed to shew mercy to his people?

Having seen *how* and in *what sense* the legal sacrifices were *expiatory*; namely, *because that, in and by their appointment, and use, God was pleased to discover his grace and favour in remitting sins*; we are next to consider the *fitness* of ascribing *propitiation* and *atonement* to the *sacrifice of Christ in heaven*. As it is with good reason supposed that the *Jewish* *expiatory* sacrifices were *borrowed* from the well known common worship and practice of all nations in religion; and it is certain that they really were, by divine appointment, in some sense *expiatory* and *propitiatory* for the *Jews*, as they were *means* by which they were *purified, absolved, and qualified to approach God in his tabernacle and temple*; so I cannot but suppose that the terms *propitiation* and *atonement*, ascribed to the ministry of Christ, are chiefly borrowed from
the

the *Jews*, and accommodated principally to them. I say chiefly and principally *borrowed of*, and *accommodated to*, the *Jews*; their sacrifices being of more account, and under a better regulation than those of the *Gentiles* were. Nor is this mere supposition: the evidence bears strongly on my mind, that, as Christ was *invested with priesthood*, in *accommodation to the Jewish church* (as was taken notice of in the *introduction* to this *Discourse*) the ministry and above-mentioned effects thereof, described by the terms *propitiation*, *atonement*, &c. must *all* be understood, by way of *accommodation* thereto. Taking the propitiation and atonement of Christ in this sense, by no means derogates from his priesthood. That, as has been shewn, by a COROLLARY drawn from PROP. III. *is founded on the covenant of grace*, and *not the covenant of grace founded on his priesthood*. The covenant was published, its terms explained, and forgiveness with God declared, by Christ, *before* he was called of God an high-priest, or inducted into, or discharged any duty belonging to, that office. The essential goodness and love of God gave birth to the whole scheme of redemption; and no office, which Christ sustains, in that scheme, can be other than *an effect*, not *cause*, of that goodness. So that we must for ever give up the notion of Christ's *pacifying* and *appeasing* the *divine justice*,

justice, causing a merciful disposition to arise in the deity, or being, in the strict and rigid sense of the word, a propitiation for us.

In *objection* to what has been said, it may be asked, How and in what sense did Christ *shed his blood for many for the remission of sins*ⁿ? No pious *protestant* is offended, when told, that Christ, when he says, *this is my body*, speaks in a figurative and improper sense; and such would surely bear to hear that Christ spoke in the *same language*, in the passage before us, if they did but duly attend thereto. However, to obviate this objection, it may be observed, that, as the notion of *remission*, or pardon, of sins, implies *grace* or *favour*; the notion of *compensation*, or *satisfaction*, for sins, price, or purchase, of *remission*, destroys *grace*, or *favour*. For how *free* soever remission may come to the sinner, it comes *not free from* God, if he be paid an *equivalent* for it. This I desire may be noted, lest we wrongly conceive of this part of *redemption*, through the *blood of Christ*, and not according to the riches of *God's grace*^o, which is absolutely impugned, and diminished, by the doctrine of a *substitution* and *satisfaction*. Tho' his blood be the price, and purchase, of the church, so that every christian is the *Lord's*^p

ⁿ Matth. xxvi. 28. ^o Eph. i. 7. ^p Acts xx. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 20. vii. 22, 23.

freed-man; his blood is not the price and purchase of *pardon*. Christ hath redeemed us not *from*, or *out of*, *the hands of God*, but *from a vain conversation*; *from sin, unto God, by his blood*. His blood is rather the *mean of conveying pardon* to us from God, than of *procuring pardon* of God for us. Remission is a *free-gift* from God, tho' Jesus, in bringing of it to us, expended his blood.

I am sensible, much has been said to *qualify* the doctrine of *satisfaction*, and *parallels* have been invented to reconcile it with that of *grace*; but without troubling myself or reader therewith, let us go to the plain *matter of fact*, and consider the *character*, which Christ bore, and the *occasion* whereon he shed his blood, to which these words, [*For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*] have a relation. It is evident from PROP. II. and III. he did not sustain the character of a *priest*, either *living* or *dying*; consequently this *blood shedding* belongeth not to his true and proper sacrifice or oblation, but to a different and distinct thing—The plain and evident state of the case stood thus.

As a *prophet*, like unto *Moses*, he had been giving a *new system of religion*, known in the prophetic stile by the name of a *covenant*. And tho' his mission was well attest-

ed by *miracles*, the *Jewish* rulers, who neither relished his sublime *doctrines*, nor his *mean appearance* for that high character he assumed, of the Messiah, *the son of God*; all which were diametrically opposite to their gross, carnal conceptions and views; entred into a combination to take away his life. Jesus, knowing that *he must be cut off, but not for himself*, or for any thing criminal in him, instituted *his supper*, in the prospect and approach thereof; and, on *this occasion*, he says, of the *cup*, *For this is my blood*, &c. The whole passage is *figurative*. The *cup* is put for the *wine* in the cup, and the wine in the cup for *his blood*, as about to be shed in confirmation of the covenant. St. Mark relates it thus, *This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many*^a. St. Luke thus: *This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you*^b. The remission of sins, for which *his blood is shed*, or was then about *to be shed*, was the *doctrine* of remission. I take the matter to be thus;—what Jesus had declared to be *the will*, or *covenant of God*, he now enjoined his followers to consider, by this *standing memorial* of his sufferings, as *sealed, ratified, and tendered to them in his blood*; and particularly, that *great article* of *everlasting forgiveness of sins*, which the *old covenant*, by *Moses*,

^a Chap. xiv. 24.

^b Chap. xxii. 20.

was *defective* in. *This*, says he, *is the new covenant* (in opposition to the old) *in my blood*; in which (and not in that of *beasts*) I ratify, establish, and present it unto you; *which blood* you are to consider as *shed for many*, for this great and singular blessing, *the remission of sins for ever*:—more is implied than is expressed.

To lead us back to our main subject, it may be very pertinently ask'd, “ If Jesus
“ did not, some how or other, pacify and
“ appease divine justice, nor occasion a mer-
“ ciful disposition in the deity, *wherein lieth*
“ *the virtue and efficacy of that, which you*
“ *call his sacrifice?*” I answer; the virtue and efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice lies here, *viz. in its being a fit and proper mean, or expedient, of representing the deity kind and propitious, in respect to the sins of the world; or in affording a medium, or light, in which he may be viewed as a sin-pardoning God, and thereby encouraging the approach of sinners unto him.* Tho’ the sacrifice, or presentment, of Christ be not the *cause* of a merciful disposition in God; yet it seems to be the best, if not only mean, whereby that disposition is clearly and distinctly seen. What a few contemplative men have, with much study, acquired, concerning the *placability* of God, and a *future happy existence*, is removed beyond all doubt, and level to the meanest capacity, by the *resurrection* and

glory of Christ. I say, *the glory of Christ*; because that includes the character of which we are treating. And truly, *his sufferings and death*, if considered simply as that of an *innocent being*, afford no prospect of grace or mercy in God, but rather the contrary: or, if it be considered only relative to his *testimony*, it will extend no farther than to a bare *probable proof* of its truth. But, when we see him, after this, *crowned with glory and honour*, we have a kind of *demonstrative evidence*, for that love of God to mankind, which he taught.

As the *place*, where the high priest offered under the law, seems to have given virtue and excellency to his ministry, rather than *what* he offered; so the virtue and excellency of Christ's ministry seems to arise from the *place*, where he made his offering, as well as from *the offering he made*. Let me not be misapprehended; I readily own it was the *greatest and best sacrifice* that could ever possibly be offered to God; and therefore must needs have the greatest virtue and excellency. The worth and virtue thereof is either *personal*, centering in Jesus alone, whose offering it was; or *relative*, with respect to us, on whose account it was made: in which last view it is *the mean of our sanctification*. And now I mention *sanctification*, it may be necessary to observe, that it is here to be taken not strictly for *inherent holiness*,

holiness, but in a large sense, for a *state of devotedness to God*, and supposes and implies *remission*, or *justification*, on his part, as well as denotes the *cleansing, purging, purifying*, &c. of the *worshipper* from all defilements of flesh and spirit. The flesh, or body, which, by reason of its being the seat of *sin*, and subject of *disease* and *death*, seem to forbid our *access* to the *holy, immortal God*, is purified and consecrated thereto, not by sprinkling the *lixivium* made with the ashes of an heifer, but, *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once*. *Pure water washes*, or rather, *faith in a risen Jesus*, which *proselytes* profess at *baptism*, sanctifies *our bodies*, and is a sufficient preparation for their employment in all the ordinances of divine worship. And, as to the *mind* or *conscience*, fretted with crimes, and haunted with gloomy fears, it finds relief, by applying to *the blood of sprinkling*, or in plainer language, *looking to Jesus*, who taught and confirmed the doctrine of pardon and eternal life, *now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God*. The virtue, or aptitude, of this sacrifice, as the mean of our sanctification, that, I say, ariseth as well from the *place* where it was made, as from the sacrifice itself. *For such an high priest became us*, or befitted our case, *who is holy, harmless, un-*

* Heb. x. 22.

defiled,

defiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens¹; and such a one is here. For Christ is not entred into the holy places made with hands, the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us². Accordingly St. Paul lays the stress of our pardon and justification on this point: He was raised for our justification³. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us⁴. If Christ be not raised, ye are yet in your sins⁵. 'Tis on this ground, that genuine Christians raise their confidence, and are looking for the mercy of God in our Lord Jesus Christ, unto eternal life.

Let us then briefly collect and state the argument—Here is *the person*, who published the gospel covenant, of God's grace to sinful men, who bore *witness* to the truth of it on earth in *blood*, raised from the dead, taken up into heaven, and *presenting himself before the throne of God most high!* Add to this, the high approbation and full satisfaction of God with his ministry, declared, in that he hath *caused him to sit down at his own right hand!* Now, to apply this—If Jesus had been an impostor and deceiver of the people, and the blood which he shed in con-

¹ Heb. vii. 26.² chap. ix. 24.³ Rom. iv. 25.⁴ chap. viii. 34.⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 17.

firmation of the covenant, had been, as it then needs must be, an *unholy thing*; is it probable, yea is it *possible*, that God should *bring him again from the dead*, and *by, and through this blood* (the grand motive or consideration) permit him to appear in the most exalted station? No; God never could countenance *such a cheat*, and in *such a manner*! The matter of fact, *Christ's resurrection and glory*, was well attested by many credible witnesses, and confirmed by various miracles, wrought by his apostles and disciples, in his name. And the aptitude and force of the *argument*, to *purge the conscience of a penitent believer* from the fearful apprehensions of the just demerit of his sins, and bring him to that better hope, by which he draws nigh unto God, is, and cannot but be, felt and experienced by him. This occasioned our author to say, *inasmuch as not without an oath he was made a priest*. i. e. an oath to this effect, *thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*, which was verified in his resurrection from the dead to an eternal life; *by so much was Jesus made a surety*, sponsor and witness of a better ^a*covenant*, which promiseth everlasting blessings to us. This *argument*, I take to be of great importance and use, which, if men did but well acquaint themselves with,

^a Heb. vii. 20, 21, 22.

would

would lead them into the true sense and grace of the gospel, and enable them to read the *pacific character* of the deity, in a light most glorious and encouraging. That our author supposes the believing *Hebrews* no strangers to it, is plain from his *valedictory* prayer for them: *Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will*^a. God would not have appeared in so endearing a manner, THE GOD OF PEACE, if he had not brought Jesus again from the dead.

Reason, or the light of nature, has, of late, been cried up with a view, in some, if possible, to explode *revelation*, as useless and unnecessary to mankind. The Gentlemen who have employed their talents this way, know very well, that a more abstract way of reasoning is needful to investigate many moral truths, than what the bulk of mankind are capable of. However, suppose it to be deducible, from the nature and reason of things, *that God will pardon penitent sinners*. What is the notion of *pardon* so deduced? I will suppose two cases. “Upon their repentance, a *prince* gives back, to *one rebel-convict*, his forfeit-

^a Heb. xiii. 20.

ed *life* and *estate*: to *another*, besides the above, he giveth a share of the *chief honours* of his court." To the person in the *first* case, his pardon places him where he was, antecedent to his crime. And this, I apprehend, to be the *utmost* import of pardon upon repentance, as it is discoverable by the light of nature. To this purpose saith *Seneca*, as I find him quoted by my Lord *Herbert*^b. "He that repents of his sins is *almost innocent*." And *Ovid*,

"He scarce hath sinn'd, but reckon'd innocent,

"Who of those sins doth heartily repent."

And it is natural to suppose, that God, when considered as a moral governor, who proposeth the virtue and happiness of his subjects as the *end* of his government, will not treat him as an *evil-doer*, who, with compunction of soul, hath changed his evil course. Accordingly, that *noble writer* saith, "It is evident, that the Heathens "esteemed *repentance* the universal atonement or *sacrament of nature*." To the person in the *second* case, pardon is an introduction to a *better* state than he was in before, it being complicated or made up of the

^b Religion of the Gentiles.

highest grace of his prince. Now the pardon which God exhibits in the gospel of his son, is of this kind. *In whom, saith the Apostle^c, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the RICHES of his grace, which he has made [or caused] to ABOUND toward us in all wisdom and prudence.* It is evident, the grace of the gospel imports more than an exemption from guilt as an obligation to punishment, even an inheritance^d in the glorious liberty of the sons of God; what the whole rational creation seems desirous of, and to groan^e after.

If it be said, “that *repentance*, as it is all that the creature, inveigled with sin, can do, *is the proper ground for the divine mercy.*” I answer: Allow it to be so; the notion of *mercy*, does not destroy, but rather suppose, a power or freedom of choice in the *Deity*, of the *mean*, *instrument*, or *agent*, by whom his abounding goodness shall be communicated; and also a *discovery* of the choice he hath made, or the *mean* he hath appointed to that end. And this consolation have we in Christ; *I am come* (saith he) *that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly^f: neither is there salvation in any other^g.* Hence ariseth

^c Ephes. i. 7, 8.^d verse 11.^e Rom. viii. 22.^f John x. 10.^g Acts iv. 12.

the reason, or fitness, of *faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*, which the gospel requireth^h, as well as *repentance toward God*.

Upon the whole : Repentance, tho' it be not a *hopeless* state, on the foot of reason, has been, and, perhaps, will still be, to the *bulk* of mankind, a *doubtful* one. And to be all one's life in doubt and uncertainty, in a matter so important and interesting, must needs be greatly uncomfortable. But thanks be unto God, for his unspeakable gift ! This single consideration of *Christ with God* ; or, to speak conformable to the *Jewish church*, our having *such an high Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the majesty, in the heavens* ; gives us a more engaging view of the *Deity*, than was ever exhibited under the *law*, and much more than ever was, or can be, discoverable by the *light of nature*.—Upon this account then, the *presentment of Christ* in our likeness, *as man, in heaven*, as it is the *mean* of representing the *Deity* kind and propitious, in respect to the sins of the world, it fitly stiled an *expiatory*, or *atoning sacrifice*.

But does not this representation of the matter tend to level the ministry of Christ with that of the *Jewish high-priest* ? I answer, “ By no means.” For how mean

^h Chap. xx. 21.

and low was the whole process of his ministry, and how faint the representation of God's grace thereby, when compared with the ministry of Christ, in heaven? It was only *once a year*, that the high priest entered into the *holy place*, when he offered the same sacrifice he had done the year before : in the repetition of which, as is justly observed by our author, *a remembrance of sins is again made*ⁱ : A plain indication of the weakness and inefficacy of their ministry to purge *effectually* the conscience, and make the *comers thereunto perfect*. At best, it was no more than an *annual* redemption. Whereas Christ, who ratified this in his blood, that *God would be merciful to our iniquities, and remember our sins no more*, in passing afterwards to *the throne of God*, where he *abideth continually*, hath obtained *eternal redemption for us*^k : Hath a complete and perfect absolution, to bestow on the *comers* to his religion, or on all who believe and obey his gospel : A *remission* of *punishments* affixed to sin, which begins in *rest* and refreshment in *this life*^l, and terminates in a *restoration* from *death* and *corruption* to the *glorious liberty* of an *immortal race* !

And, as the high priest on the great day of expiation, did also *make an atonement for*

ⁱ Chap. x. 1, 2, 3. ^k ix. 12. ^l Matth. xi. 28.

the holy place, which was probably done, by the blood ^m being thrown towards both sides of it, in the sprinkling, that was made *seven or eight times* before the *mercy seat*, whereby it was purified, and fitted for the worship of the people : So Christ our great high priest, hath purified the *heavenly things themselves* with *his better sacrifice* ⁿ; hath fitted and consecrated, by the offering of *himself* there, the *holiest of all*, for the worship of mankind. Where *this man* made his offering, *other men* may make theirs. Upon this account he is said, not only to *sanctify them for access*, but to *open a way for them, to the throne of God with boldness, by his blood, and through his flesh* ^o.

In fine : As the *presentment* of Christ, in *our likeness, as man*, in heaven, is a moral, effective mean of representing the Deity *kind and propitious*; how fitly does he bear the *propitiatory character* ascribed to the ministry of the *Jewish* priests, as well as answer it more fully ?

^m Patrick on Levit. xvi. 16,

• Chap. x. 19, 20.

ⁿ Heb. ix. 23.

PROPOSITION VII.

The Offering of Jesus Christ is but one, and cannot be repeated.

HAVING considered the *propitiatory nature*, we next come to treat of the *unity*, or singleness, of Christ's sacrifice. What this *Proposition* contains, stands directly opposed to the *reiterated sacrifices* of the *Jewish* priests; and the *truth* thereof will appear, by considering, briefly, a few things, which our author has presented us with, *viz. the circumstances in which it was made*; the *extensive use and design of it*; its *perfection*; and the *covenant, upon which it is founded*.

First, If we consider the *peculiar circumstances*, in which this oblation was made, a repetition of it will appear highly improbable and unnecessary. As what Christ offered, was *Himself*; so it was himself, in a remarkable condition, and accompanied with these particulars; *to wit*, after he had lived an obedient, sinless life; suffered a painful, ignominious death; and was raised to everlasting life. These circumstances enter into the account, and help to make up the excellency, moral worth, and value, of his sacrifice; and are essential thereto. Now,
if

if it was necessary that Christ should *offer himself often*, it would be necessary he should *appear often* in the world for that purpose; *i. e.* be incarnate, and go through a fresh course of obedience, sufferings and death, in order to qualify himself for it. *Then must he often have suffered, since the foundation of the world.* But this is contrary to fact: For, though God purposed, from the beginning, to save the world, by Jesus Christ; Jesus was not manifested in flesh, or did not appear, till the end of the *Jewish* dispensation: *But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself*^p. Wherefore, though the *Jewish* high priest did, at certain periods of time, repeat his service, and *enter into the holy place, every year, with the blood of others*; it is not to be expected that Christ, who is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, should exactly conform to that pattern, and *offer himself often*^q.

Secondly, A repetition of Christ's sacrifice appears unnecessary from its *public, extensive use, and design*. He is Lord-Agent and *Manager* in chief of all spiritual affairs that concern the human family; and, tho' he bear the office and dignity of an *high priest*, principally in respect to one branch of

^p Heb. ix. 26.

^q verses 24, 25.

them,

them, *all* have equal interest in his service. In this, he is to be considered, *like Melchisedec*, a priest at large, over the world, properly qualified to *bleſs* all well-disposed persons. His offering was made, not for *ſome particular ſins*, or the ſins of *ſome particular perſons* only ; as the legal ſacrifices were. No ; Chriſt's miniſtry is not confined to this *religious ſect*, or that *conceited party* ; but may extend to all mankind. Whatever pride, or a *Jewiſh ſpirit*, may ſuggeſt, the Chriſtian is otherwiſe taught : *He is the propitiation for our ſins ; and not for ours only, but alſo for the ſins of the whole world* *. If his miniſtry had been of a more private nature, limited to *ſome ſins*, and the ſins of *ſome perſons* only ; it might, for ought I know, be neceſſary that he ſhould repeat his courſe, as often as thoſe private, particular caſes occurred. But, as it was calculated for the *whole world*, and *all men* have but one courſe therein, which is terminated by *death and judgment*, ſo that they return not to act over the like again ; there is no manner of reaſon that Chriſt ſhould return to act over his courſe. 'Tis ſufficient that he was *made in all things like unto his brethren* ; and, in this reſpect, *hath one courſe of ſaving miniſtry*, to answer their *one courſe of ſin and imperfection*. This, I think, is what

* 1 John ii. 2.

our author hinteth, in the following words : *And, as it is appointed unto men once to die ; but, after this, the judgment ; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.* But, lest the promise of Christ, and the expectations of Christians grounded thereon, of his second advent, should be applied to favour the notion of his offering himself again ; 'tis added, *and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation* *. Tho' he will come again, 'tis not to repeat his course, by another sacrifice of himself for sin ; but to consummate the happiness of his followers, in virtue of what he has done already.

Again ; It is contrary to the *perfection* of Christ's offering, already made, to admit of any other. All the ends and uses of expiatory, atoning sacrifices, what they ever had, or can have, are answered by this *one offering*. What a lovely idea arises, of the supreme Majesty, whilst we contemplate this *exalted man*, stationed by him, at his own right hand, in the quality and character of our minister ? God appears perfectly well-disposed to mankind, in permitting one in their *likeness*, clothed in a body, to approach him so nearly : Atonement is made for, or upon the account of, sins, whereto they have been liable ; the *exceeding riches*

* Heb. ix. 27, 28.

of God's *grace* are exhibited, and peace and friendship between him and the *penitent* believer is hereby effectually established, to the glory of the one, and consolation of the other. And, if all this be accomplished, by *his one course*, why should Jesus repeat it and offer himself afresh? A repetition destroys its perfection; supposes what is done to be weak and inefficacious, and sets the priesthood of Christ upon a level, in this respect, with the levitical. The continual round, which those men went, making atonement *year after year*, argued the insufficiency of the service to *make the comers thereunto perfect*. They stood *from time to time ministring and offering the same sacrifices*; which shews they could not finally absolve and effectually remove all guilt from the conscience of the worshipper. *But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting its glorious and happy issue. For, by one offering, he hath perfected, for ever, them that are sanctified.*

In fine; It is contrary to the *tenor* of the new and everlasting covenant, upon which his ministry is founded, that Jesus should repeat his course, and offer himself again. To this the *holy Ghost* in the ancient prophetic writings bears witness, with our author.

¹ Heb. x. 11—15.

For, after that *Jeremiah*, who places the two covenants in opposition and contrast to each other, had said before, *this is the covenant, that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them*; thereby describing the spirituality and congruity of the doctrinal and preceptive part of the gospel to the moral nature of man; he adds, summing up all its privileges in one, *and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more*. Now, as our author justly infers therefrom, *where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin*^a. Where everlasting forgiveness takes place, sacrifices must cease. 'Tis quite unnecessary, and altogether absurd to suppose, that Christ, whose entrance into heaven, and glorious session at the father's right-hand, confirmeth such a remission of sins as this, *that they shall be remembered no more*; should renew his course and offer himself again. It would be to counteract the covenant promulgated and established by him; to undo what he hath already done, as well as to do afresh what he has done already.

I have endeavoured to follow our *author's* argument in proof of this proposition, on which a good deal of stress is laid, in several parts of his *epistle*. And 'tis a point of

^a Heb. x. 15—19.

great advantage, in Christ's priesthood, over the *Aaronical*, that he effected at *once*, what they of that order by their continual ministry, could not do. *By him, all that believe are justified, from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses².*

PROPOSITION VI.

Jesus Christ by being and appearing as a man, in heaven, is the proper advocate and intercessor for mankind with God.

THE *Jewish* high-priestly office has always been supposed to consist of *two* parts, *viz.* to *offer sacrifice*, and to *intercede for the people*: both which branches of duty, are performed by *Jesus Christ*. *When, where and how* he executed the *former*; we have above seen: how he dischargeth the *latter* is here suggested; to wit, *by being and appearing as A MAN, in heaven*. Let me here observe this difference; that, as his sacrifice, or tender, made of *himself*, to God is represented as *one transient act*; his intercession is considered as a *perpetual work*, or what he *ever and continually* doth.

But what is meant by *intercession*? “So far as I can see, (saith a judicious commen-

² Acts xiii. 39.

tator”, who hath considered it in all places where we find it in the new Testament, and who hath my particular thanks for his *great service* to the church,) “the word properly “signifies, *to meet and treat with a person either for, or against another.* And “so may signify in general *to negotiate, manage, or transact* an affair on the behalf “of others; not only by intercession, intreaty or supplication in their favour, but in “any other way, as the case may require.” This being the sense of the word, the *intercession of Christ* may be considered, either in that large sense, as suited to his general character, of *Lord agent*; or, in a more restrained sense, as it suits his particular and special character, of *high-priest*. The latter concerns us at present,

Whatever ejaculations the *Jewish high-priest* offered to God, at the time of his *presenting* and *sprinkling* of the blood in the *most holy place*, (as some undoubtedly every devout priest did on such a solemn occasion,) as there was no set *form of prayer* prescribed, nor any injunction laid on him, *to pray and plead for the people*; the notion of his *advocateship* must arise from something else. In like manner, when Jesus is considered as *advocate* and *intercessor*, we must not imagine it to arise from

any *supplications* and *pleadings* he maketh to God for us; that would be to derogate from his sacrifice, whereby he hath obtained eternal redemption for us; and from the covenant, upon which his ministry is founded; and is quite incompatible with his glorious advancement and station; all power both in heaven and earth being given unto him, and he appointed to sit at the father's right-hand. 'Tis true, *in the days of his flesh*, when he was compassed about with infirmities, he *offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death*^y; nor do we presume to say that his high exaltation *above all things* forbideth any pious and filial address from him to his father; *for it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him*^z. All, we pretend to say, is, that as *our advocate and intercessor*, we must not grossly conceive him as a *humble suitor, supplicant, or pleader*, according to the common acceptance of the terms.

As the high-priest, in appearing, by God's appointment, to make an atonement, on behalf of the *Jewish church*; and *bearing the names of the tribes, for a memorial, before him*, became respected as an *intercessor*; so Jesus, by entering into heaven properly qualified to transact for *others*, and there appear-

^y Heb. v. 7.

^z 1 Cor. xv. 27.

ing, *as a man*, in the *highest glory*, comes directly under the same favourable and friendly character. His deep abasement, in *taking hold of the nature of man*, and the sufferings he underwent for their sakes, is a strong argument of his being well affected to the interests of mankind, and his having their cause at heart, in the court of heaven. For this reason, he is fitly recommended as *a merciful and faithful high-priest*; ^a one, *that can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*; he having passed the same stage and course of things; and *was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*^b. His qualifications, influence, and ability for so kind an office, are indisputable. *We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour*, on purpose that he, by the grace of God, *having tasted of death for every man*, might be qualified to pursue the ends of it, and effectually save *all that come unto God by him*; which he is able evermore to do, *seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*^c.

The *advocateship* of Christ, in this particular view of it, chiefly relates to persons under a *sense of the guilt of sin*. As he came on earth to call sinners to repentance, he liveth in heaven to dispense pardon, and ad-

^a Heb. ii. 17.
vii. 25.

^b Chap. iv. 15.

^c Chap. ii. 9.

minister consolation, to such as obey his call. And, as a person of an honest and pious disposition, (especially among *minor-christians*, such as St. *John* calls *little children*) may possibly fall into sin, through ignorance, or infirmity of the flesh, to his great disquiet; in that case, *this office* of Jesus is designed for *relief*, which it cannot fail of affording both as it is *founded on the covenant of grace* which promiseth pardon; and, as Jesus holds it by virtue of his having been *a partaker of flesh and blood*, whereby he is disposed to *compassionate the ignorant, and them that are out of the way*. As for wilful, habitual sinners, I do not know they have any concern with Christ, in this special capacity. What St. *John* says, *if any man sin we have an advocate with the father*^a, must undoubtedly be taken in a *restrained* sense, and be applicable only to Christians, when they fail in their duty, through their own weakness and the force of temptation. And I do not know but the Apostle, in describing the advocate with this epithet, *Jesus Christ the righteous*, may not only intimate the success, which is like to attend him, but what *sort* of cause we may expect him to undertake. He is *Jesus Christ the righteous*, or *just*; is to be consider'd *as such* now in heaven, as well as that he *was such* when on earth. This our author likewise puts the *Hebrews* in mind of,

^a Heb. v. 2. ^c 1 John. ii. 1.

by enumerating the properties of Christ to them: *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.* He is all this now; and therefore will not, or rather cannot, be brought to defend *the cause of sin*, nor *wilful, habitual sinners*.

How Jesus *maketh intercession*, we have already so far hinted, as to remove the notion of his being *a solicitor*. It is to be understood in a moral sense. *Jesus* is all that to a penitent believer, which his case requireth, or seemeth to him to require. So great is the love of Christ, and his concern to save a lost world, that, together with his station at the Father's right hand, in power and glory, he appears fully possessed of all the qualities and furniture of a most prevailing advocate. So that *virtually* he *maketh intercession*; and even his *blood*, which he shed on earth, in confirmation of the covenant, called therefore *the blood of sprinkling*, even *that*, I say, (he being now in heaven, *by*, and *through* it,) *speaketh* in behalf of the humble worshipper of God, thro' him. I may add, that in a moral way, as much satisfaction is derived to the worshipper, if not more, from this contemplation of Christ, than from any the most powerful pleadings, and suasive oratory, he could suppose, to be uttered in his behalf.

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Thus far we have discoursed of *the priesthood of Christ*, his *sacrifice and intercession*, as directly *accommodated* to the *Jewish Christians*: And, because it here issues and terminates in that more grand and essential character, which he sustains, as *Lord and head over all things to the church*, as composed of *Gentiles as well as Jews*; it will be no unnecessary *digression* to take a little notice thereof.

In this point of view, Jesus is *sole Lord-mediator*. 'Tis well known that the use of *mediators*, or *agents*, between God and men, had the countenance and sanction of the most reputable *sects* among *Jews and Gentiles*. The former, besides their priest-mediators, had *Moses and Angels*: the latter had their *Lords many*^f; many *dæmons and heroes*, by whose intervention all intercourse, correspondence and communications were supposed to be carried on between the supreme being and sinful mortals; “it being (they “supposed) a debasing of the divine nature to “think we could converse with him without “them^g.”

The time, when Jesus took on him the *mediatorial character*, was at his *baptism*, and *first preaching the gospel*; before he was ordained a priest: I say, he was *mediator* before he was *priest*: for, tho' every priest be a mediator, every mediator is

^f 1 Cor. viii. 5.

^g *Whitby* on Col. ii.

not a priest. This I desire may be noted, in order that we do not confound and jumble things together, which are in themselves separate and distinct. And, as Jesus took upon him the mediatorial character, when he entred on his prophetic ministry, and published the new covenant; he afterwards rose in that character, being, by his exaltation to the Father's right hand, with respect to the *Jews*, a mediator superior to *Angels*, to *Moses*, and to their *high priest*; and, with respect to both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the *one Lord-agent* and *only mediator* between God and men. The church is compleat, fill'd and perfected, with every kind and salutary work and office, necessary to its worship of, and communion with, God, *in him*, who is *the head of all principality and power*. He is above all lord-agents and priest-mediators, that ever were, by divine, or human appointment, regarded in the world; *angels, authorities, and powers being made subject unto him*ⁿ. God hath employed upon *us who believe*, *the working of the might of his power*, even that which he exerted in *raising Christ from the dead*, and in *setting him at his own right hand, in the heavenly offices*, or places, which were occupied and filled by dignitaries of one kind and another, *for above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is*

* 1 Pet. iii. 32.

named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Jesus is the *only mediator*, the prince and patron, Lord-agent and advocate, in the court of heaven, for the family of mankind. His elevation to the father's right hand both proves, and presents, him to us, as such: and, if unprejudiced reason can say nothing against the fitness, and decency, of sinners being made acquainted with, or approaching, God, by means of some *third person*; it cannot object to the honour, which is here done to Jesus Christ, who really hath merited the place and station. We are under infinite obligations to him: *he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins by his blood; and hath made us kings and priests to God and his father; and is worthy to receive glory and dominion over us for ever and ever^k.* His jurisdiction over us is founded in right of purchase: *we are redeemed from a vain conversation, or the idolatrous life of our forefathers, to the pure and spiritual worship of God, not with corruptible things as silver and gold, wherewith slaves were wont to be freed; but with the precious blood of Christ, which, tho' spilt as base, or as the blood of*

ⁱ Eph. i. 19.

^k Rev. i. 5, 6.

a capital offender, was, nevertheless, as that of a lamb without blemish and without spot¹. And he hath obtained it of God, his Father, as a reward of his most perfect obedience and exalted virtue. He had a glory with the Father before the world was, in respect of which, tho' "he was in the form of God," yet he was not greedy of being honoured "as God, but (on the contrary) willingly "emptied himself of his glory," and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, in that habit and fashion, and given him a name which is above every name; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of offices in heaven, and offices in earth, and offices under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father^m.

As this of sole Lord-mediator, is the fix'd, grand character of Jesus Christ, 'tis a peculiar essential point in the christian religion to own and duly acknowledge him therein. God hath constituted him the mean, instrument, and agent; in, by and through whom, he will convey pardon and eternal life to sinful mortals; neither is there salvation in any

¹ 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

^m Phil. ii. 6—12.

other. This was what Jesus himself taught ; *I am the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father but by me. Verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*ⁿ. And, upon this ground, it is, that the church *doeth all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and [who is] the Father by him*^o.

When I say, *the church doth all in the name of the Lord Jesus* ; I must be understood as excluding the *idolatrous church of Rome*, who really exclude themselves, in that they do not *all*, nor perhaps a *tenth* part of their devotional exercises, in this name ; but in the name, or names, of some *he*, or *she-saint*. It is strange and shocking that any should pretend to take their religion from Jesus Christ, who came to destroy the absurd, wild scheme of *pagan theology*, stuffed with *gods many*, i. e. ^p many celestial sovereign gods, in heaven : And *lords many*, i. e. many baalim, or lords-agents, and presidents over earthly things ; and to establish the truth of *one* sovereign God, *the Father, of whom are all things*, and to whom, as supreme, we are to direct all our services : And but *one Lord-Agent*, i. e. Himself, Jesus Christ, *by whom are all things* that

ⁿ John xiv. 6. xvi. 23. ^o Col. iii. 17. ^p Lock,
1 Cor. viii. Sect. IV. Note (c).

come from the Father to us, and by whom alone we find access to the Father : I say, it is strange and shocking that any should pretend to take their religion from Jesus Christ, when this self-same religion of theirs is little better than the rankest superstition and idolatry of the *heathens*. 'Tis true, there is a change of names ; instead of those the *pagans* stiled *gods* and *goddeses*, this church hath its *saints*, *patrons*, and *patroneesses*. Whether they retain this practice, thro' a voluntary humility and affectation of great piety and devotion, or any other pretence, 'tis a gross and most scandalous *corruption* of Christianity, a defection from, and a bold invasion of the rights of, Christ. How are *Angels*, who are supposed to be a different *species* of beings, qualified to represent men ? And what capacities have the *patriarchs* and *apostles*, the *blessed virgin* and other *female saints* to be *our agents*, who are themselves under the power and dominion of death, till the resurrection ? But, where *ignorance is the mother of devotion*, there mediators *swarm*, and great is their furniture. They have, it seems, different talents, and are fit patrons, one for the *tooth-ack*, another for *inflammations* ; this for the *ague*, that for the *plague*, &c. &c. And their *litanies* are a *mere bead-roll*, a long tedious list of saints, *two hundred and thirty*, and upwards, being in one *psalter*. (that w. s

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printed at *London, anno. 1503.*) invoked by name, with *a pray for us.* The christian scheme disavows and condemns this extravagance^a; and, as it is simple, in this respect, like the object of its worship, which is but *one*; so is it salutary. We are not at a loss to seek a proper patron in heaven, to represent our grievances, if any think their case to require it; and are happily prevented from imploring the intercession and aid of *unqualified, unknown beings.* The exalted man, Christ Jesus, is the only person constituted by the Father, and who hath all the opportunity, power, and virtue, that can be thought requisite for discharging so kind an office. No deficiency, in point of friendly mediatorial offices for sinners, can be objected to the gospel scheme. As in the whole of it God *hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence*, this part in particular appears to be calculated, not only to preserve a due decorum in our addresses to God, and, by way of reward, to our Saviour, but to prevent us from *despair* on one hand, and being *too superstitious* on the other: *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.* But as an enlargement on this head is beside my purpose, I shall close my discourse on the Priesthood of Jesus Christ with the following *general Remarks*, by way of *inference.*

^a Col. ii. 18, 19.

REMARK I.

From what has been said under *Prop. II, III.* it appears, *That the claim of a share of Christ's priesthood in any set of men is egregiously absurd.* The office is appropriate to, and solely resides in, the person of Christ, in heaven; *who is a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.* He is really and truly what *Melchisedec* was, *figuratively* and in appearance, *a son of God, an immortal Priest*; one, who ever lives to discharge the functions of his office himself, without admitting any competitors, or successors, as the *levitical* priesthood did. If the several competitors and claimants to Christ's priesthood could produce the single qualification, of immortality, and shew that they were *without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life*; we might, with some shew of reason, admit them to be priests, *after the order of Melchisedec*; many of them of the *Romish* church having, perhaps, as much temporal power, and as large a revenue, as that Royal Priest was possessed of. I say, if they had that *one* qualification, i. e. did, like the immortal race, *abide continually*, they might be admitted to be, what they affect to call themselves^r,

^r *Distinctions of sacrifice*, p. 75.

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Melchisedecian Priests; and, in this quality, they might *receive tithes, offer bread and wine* (of their own, as *Melchisedec* did) and *blest* the world. But they could not, even then, be priests of *Christ's order*. Jesus Christ never received *tithes*, nor did he, *as a priest, offer bread and wine*. He did not enter into this high office, till his resurrection from the dead: *For, when he was on earth he was not a priest: and, if he were now on earth, he should not be a priest*; his service belonging to, and being no where performed but in, the *heavenly sanctuary*. How absurd is it, then, to talk, that “the
 “priesthood of Jesus Christ is one, divided
 “among many priests, who partake of his
 “power, and who exercise, in his name, the
 “functions of his ministry—*That* the priest-
 “hood of Jesus Christ is exercised, in the
 “church, by men, legally ordained and
 “consecrated.—*That* they partake of the
 “royal priesthood of Jesus Christ; they
 “exercise his priesthood and his power.” I say, how *absurd*, if not downright stupid and arrogant, is this claim? If Jesus himself was not qualified for this priesthood, when on earth, how are these men qualified for it? And, since he himself *should not be a priest, if he were now on earth*, how is it possible that they should be, what even he

himself cannot be? If *he* himself cannot here exercise his priestly functions, supposing him present; how can *they* exercise those functions, in his name? Have they his priesthood and power, where himself has it not? His ministry belongs to the *heavenly sanctuary*, the *true tabernacle*: wherefore, if ever they are capable of partaking of *his royal priesthood*, and exercising the powers thereof, they must be first translated to heaven, where, I doubt not, they will soon drop their pretensions.

'Tis true, tho' the office is immutably fixed, in the person of Christ; and he, in the exercise of it, is limited to God's *presence of glory*, in heaven, the effects of his ministry are of great extent. He is *High Priest over the house of God*; and, wherever the gospel comes, all men may, if they will, receive the advantages of his service. Amongst many, that might be enumerated, this is not the least, namely, *an entire abolition of that scheme of laws, whereby an order of priesthood was established among men*. For the priesthood being changed, from the tribe of *Levi* to our Lord, who sprang out of *Judah*, and is a priest of quite different circumstances, *there is made of necessity a change also of the law*¹. Wherefore, there is no longer a *priesthood of divine right*, vested in any one

¹ Heb. vii. 12, 13.

set of men. Since the installment of Jesus and his one offering, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin*; and, where there is no sacrifice to offer, there can be no priest wanting: His *more excellent ministry* hath for ever rendered the *order* among men useless and unnecessary. *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment*, which established priesthood on earth, *for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof*". And, as the order is abolished, so the *law* relating to the *maintenance* of the order is abolished with it. The support of this order was a prodigious expence to the people. The common *Levites*, with their *habitations*, *pastures* and *gardens*, and the *tithe* of all the *corn*, *fruit*, and *cattle* throughout *Israel*, had a larger inheritance than any other tribe possessed. And, as for that family, in which the priesthood was settled, * " such
 " an ample provision was made for them,
 " that, without any share in the land, their
 " portion was far richer than that of any
 " other persons whatsoever. As they had
 " yearly the first fruits of the whole country,
 " which was at least the *sixtieth* part of the
 " fruits it produced, and the *tenth* part of
 " the tithe given to the *Levites*, and all
 " free-will offerings, together with the mo-
 " ney, which arose out of persons, and

* Heb. vii. 18. * Bp. Patrick on Numb. xviii. 20.

" things

“ things, devoted unto God ; and all the
“ firstlings of cows, sheep and goats, and
“ the redemption-money for the firstlings
“ of such creatures as were unclean : So
“ they had all the meat-offerings, offerings
“ for sin, and trespass-offerings, together
“ with the breast and shoulder of all peace-
“ offerings, and the skins of all burnt-offer-
“ ings ; and the loaves made of the first
“ dough, and the shew-bread, and (as *Jo-*
“ *sephus* and others expound *Deut. xviii. 3.*)
“ a considerable part of every beast, that
“ was killed, for private use ; which, if well
“ weighed, there will appear a vast differ-
“ ence between the priests and the rest of
“ the people. For the *first fruits* ALONE,
“ if they were not the *sixtieth* part of the
“ produce of the country, might seem suffi-
“ cient, especially if the firstlings be added ;
“ the priests not being the *sixtieth* part of
“ the people, no, nor the *hundredth* part, as
“ learned men have computed.” Nor
was this peculiar to the priesthood, esta-
blished by the law of Moses ; for, ^y “ among
“ all the nations, the priesthood was so ho-
“ nourable and elevated a station, and at
“ the same time so commodious, that it was
“ looked upon, by the people, with some
“ sort of jealousy ;” and very deservedly.

JESUS, *when he ascended on high, abo-*

^y *Calmet. Art. PRI.*

lished all enslaving orders and ordinances, *be led captivity captive*; and, like a victorious prince, in his triumph, *gave gifts unto men*; to wit, *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers*, to the end a sacred society might be gathered, under himself, the *patron and head*, who might minister to each other, in truth and love, as *members of the same body, fitly joined together, and compacted, by that which every joint supplieth*².

As for *apostles, prophets, and evangelists*, those offices have long since ceas'd in the church, and *pastors and teachers* only remain. These, I apprehend, are otherwise called *bishops and presbyters*; of one office both, but differing in degree. What that office is, we learn from our author¹. *They watch for souls, as they that must give account*. A very different employment this, to that of serving the tabernacle, or being busied in external ceremonies, forms and modes of worship. The *two orders*, that of *priests*, and that of *bishops or overseers*, are absolutely distinct; and it is pity that any language should be perverted so, as to be capable of giving, by one term, two different, distinct ideas. This, however, among sober protestants, is the case with the term, *priest*, when appropriated to the *national*

¹ Eph. iv. 8—15.² Heb. xiii. 17.

clergy; they meaning no more by it than *presbyter*, or *elder*; whereas some *high church-men*, together with the *papists*, retain it in the original sense, as expressive of *sacrifice* and *mediation*. These *elders*, or *spiritual guides*, have a monitorial authority over their flocks in the Lord, and are to be *highly esteemed* in proportion to their work and labour^b, and to be supported therein. For, though the burdensome law of *tithes*, *first fruits*, &c. is no longer divine, the law of reason, which is the christian law, is of perpetual obligation, and this dictateth to us that *the workman is worthy of his meat*, and *the labourer of his reward*^c. Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel^d. To compel any, indeed, to maintain *idle drones*, and contribute to the support of ministers, whose labours neither they nor the public do enjoy, is a *grievance* not to be laid at Christ's door.

'Tis true, there is a *christian priesthood*, but not like that under the law, confined to one tribe and set of men. This is the common privilege of all Christians, who enjoy every advantage of a moral and divine nature, which belonged to the *Jewish* priesthood. They are *the clergy*, a *kingdom of*

^b 1 Thess. v. 12.

^c Matth. x. 10. 1 Tim. v. 18.

^d 1 Cor. ix. 14.

priests,

priests, an holy nation, a peculiar people, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. “The christian people, or “the whole body of the church” (saith a commentator ^c of great learning and integrity) “which, in later ages, have been “called *the laity*, by the Apostles, were “stiled *the clergy*. For, in the sacred writings, the *bishops, presbyters* and *deacons* “are never once called, the *priesthood*, the “*church*, or the *clergy* : — But the *scriptures* “apply these names to *Christians* in general, “and without distinction.—For they are all “*the Lord’s portion*, and *the lot of his inheritance*.” They, one and all, belong to the elder house, *the church of the first-born*^f, which are enrolled in heaven; are of nearest access to God, and need not the intervention and assistance of another order to render their worship acceptable; to sprinkle, and purify, and bless, and absolve them.

REMARK II.

When the death of Christ is called a Sacrifice, it is to be understood in a lax, popular sense; and not to be restrained to his priesthood, and taken as his proper, atoning sacrifice. The reader may see the ground of this

^c See Dr. *Benson’s* Notes on 1 Pet. ii. 5—9. Chap. v. 3.
^f Heb. xii. 23.

remark under *Prop. II. Corol. II. Prop. III, IV. Corol. II, III.* I shall only here briefly suggest—That, as Jesus was not ordained a priest, *i. e. a sacrificer* (for that is the single notion of the term *priest*, applied to him) till his resurrection from the dead; 'tis impossible his death should be *his* sacrifice, or the true, proper, special oblation, which it was necessary *he* should offer to God in *that* capacity, or character.—Again; As the sacrifice of Christ was but *one*, and *once made*; if his death was that sacrifice, this absurdity follows, That *he was a sacrificer, when he was no priest; and, when he was a priest, he was no sacrificer*; or, in other words, he was a priest and no priest.—Again; As the ministry of Christ's priesthood is limited to heaven, *where it was of necessity he should offer*; his death must most evidently be excluded from that, which is properly and emphatically called *his sacrifice*. These hints are so plain that the truth of the above-remark *must*, and in fair consequence cannot but, be admitted, to wit, *when the death of Christ is called a sacrifice, it is to be understood in a lax, popular sense*, by way of metaphor and figure only; *and is not to be restrained to his priesthood, and taken as his proper, atoning sacrifice*. To illustrate this.—For instance. A generous donation is called a *sacrifice*. *To do good and communicate*, which is part of the christian service, are *such sacrifices with*
R *which*

which God is well pleasedⁱ. So St. Paul^e was himself ready to be offered, or poured forth, as a libation, upon the sacrifice and service of the faith. And of this was Jesus the great exemplar and pattern, who loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour^h. As Jesus freely submitted to the will of his father, in the death he was to suffer, and herein discovered the greatest generosity and self-denial, in order to promote an universal good, the saving a lost world; he may be said, in a large and popular sense, to sacrifice his life, to his own and his father's love of mankind: but then, in this sense, the term sacrifice, may as well be applied to his undertaking, in general, as to this particular part of it. He made a sacrifice of himself, of his glory, reputation, and comfort of life, to save sinners.

Again; The cruel and barbarous death of an innocent person is commonly called a *sacrifice*. So saith an *historian*ⁱ, speaking of the *Lord Russel*, “the general opinion then was, and still is, that this unfortunate nobleman fell a sacrifice to the revenge of the king and the duke.” So we may say of *Jesus*; “his death was a sacrifice to the rage and malice of a wicked disappointed set of people.”

ⁱ Heb. xiii. 16. ^z Phil. ii. 17. ^h Eph. v. 2. ⁱ *Rapin.*

Now,

Now, tho' all the circumstances in both instances, as voluntary submission, generous self-denial, and innocence suffering a cruel and barbarous death, entred into the case before us; yet they are not sufficient to prove the death of Christ was his proper, special sacrifice. Tho' *no man could take away his life*, had he been otherwise disposed; and therefore he *freely* submitted to *lay it down of himself*^k; he was not *active* but *passive* in death. Neither did he die, in the quality of a priest; but (if what himself hath said is to be credited) in that of a *Pastor* and *Shepherd*^d, by devouring wolves, in defence of his sheep. The sacrifice, we are at present concerned with, is, that which was made and executed by Christ himself, *as a priest*; what was properly and eminently *his*, or in which *he was the sacrificer*. This could not be his death; for he was no minister therein, but wholly *quiescent* and passive.—The *Jewish* rulers and the *Roman* governour and soldiers acted the priest.

In this same sense of the word, *sacrifice*, is that of St. *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, to be taken. *For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us*^m. *The sacrifice of the Lord's passover*, in the primary sense and application of the terms, seemeth to belong only to that part of the service, which consisted in

^k John x. 18.

^d verse 11—16.

^m 1 Cor. v. 7.

the *sprinkling* of the *blood*, and not to the *killing* of the *lamb*, see *Exod. xii. 22—28*. And 'tis plain, from the context, that *St. Paul*, in representing *Christ*, as the christians *paschal lamb*, has his eye solely to the *killing* of the *lamb*, in order to the *holy feast*, upon its flesh, with *unleavened bread*; and not to the *sprinkling* of the blood, which was the first notion of it, as a *sacrifice*. Wherefore, if the term *sacrificed*, had been here avoided by our *translators*, and the *marginal reading* had took place, *Christ our passover is slain for us*; the sentiments of the *Apostle*, I apprehend, would have been as well express'd. But, be that as it will: if *Christ* in his *death* was a sacrifice for us; as his death was no part of his priestly service, it cannot possibly be restrained thereto, or pass for a *sacrifice*, in any other, than the same *figurative sense*, in which he is our *paschal lamb*: *i. e.* as his death affordeth us a perpetual, holy festival.

REMARK III.

*When Christ suffered death upon the cross, he did not there make, " by his one oblation of " himself once offered, a full, perfect, and " sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfac- " tion for the sins of the whole world."*ⁿ For,

ⁿ *Consecration Prayer.*

if he had, what is the reason that *he must of necessity have somewhat also to offer in heaven?* Besides; if Christ must first offer himself on the *cross*, and then in *heaven*; when he *was* liable to death, and when he was *not* liable to death: what is this but *two* offerings, instead of *one oblation of himself once offered?* The plain truth is, as above taken notice of; the death of Jesus is *improperly* called *his* sacrifice. 'T was rather a *Jewish* sacrifice, a sacrifice of *their* making, than *his*: A sacrifice, in which was filled up the measure of the sins of that dissolute people, rather than by which atonement and satisfaction was made, for the sins of the whole world. That which is emphatically called *Christ's sacrifice*, of his own special work and office, whereto our sanctification and absolution is ascribed, was made in heaven.

REMARK IV.

That rite, which was ordained to be a memorial of the death of Christ, was not ordained to be a memorial of his sacrifice. This is plain and evident: The supper was instituted in memory of Christ's death; and if his death was not his sacrifice, it was not instituted in memory of his sacrifice. It was in memory of him once present; not in memory of any after transaction to be performed by him in his absence. If the supper

per be a *commemoration of a sacrifice*, 'tis only of a *nominal and figurative* one; not of that *grand sacrifice*, which was Christ's *actively* considered in his *sacerdotal* capacity. Wherefore, to call the Lord's table *an altar*, and partaking of the Eucharist, *feasting upon his sacrifice*, is highly improper and unwarrantable.

'Tis true, our Author tells the *Hebrews*, *we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle*^o. But, if it be difficult to know what he here means, by *altar* (as is generally allowed,) it would render the context and scope of his argument more difficult, if not absurd, to apply that term to the *Lord's table*. Let us suppose he means, by it, *the Cross of Christ*, as learned men have conjectured; the Lord's table cannot, even in a *secondary* sense, bear the epithet of an *altar*, that not coming in the place of *the cross*, whereon Christ suffered, but in the place of the *table*, upon which the *Israelites* did eat the *pascchal supper*^p.

We might, perhaps, get some light into this obscure passage, if by *altar*, we understand *the service performed by a priest*: a sense of the word, that seems to have some countenance from *Lam. ii. 7.* and other places of scripture. It is certain that, *without the camp*, and *within the veil*, the two

^o Chap. xiii. 10.

^p See *Plain Account*, p. 47—57.

places mentioned by our author, and which he makes to answer, the one, to the place where Jesus *suffered*; the other, to the place where he *ministreth as a priest*, no altar was erected. Let us take a view, then, of his argument—*Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, &c. q. d.* We christians have such a service performed by Jesus our high priest, in which *meats* (about which some make an undue stir among you) have no concern. The *grace*, or favour, of God, resulting from this *service* to us, is what you are to partici-
pate of, and be established in. And that this his service excepteth meats, is apparent from the *levitical* law itself; for that ordained that *the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary, by the high priest for sin, should be burnt without the camp*, and not be eaten of. *Wherefore* Jesus also, *that he might* answer the end of those great expiatory sacrifices, and *sanctify the people with his own blood*, by bringing of it into the true tabernacle, as I have already mentioned, first *suffered* in his body, *without the gate*; and consequently left no room for us to expect any meats to avail under his dispensation. *Let us, therefore, go forth unto him, without the camp*; (where there is no-
thing

thing to be eaten ; but all is consumed that was for meats, in other sacrifices) *bearing his reproach*. For here, under this legal dispensation, *we have no continuing city*, no place to abide in, long, where any sacrifices shall be offered ; *but we seek one to come*, under Christ. By him, therefore, who is the high priest of our profession, *let us*, instead of regarding meats, *offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually*, that is, not the fruits of the earth and firstlings of the flock and herd, but, *the fruit of our lips*, giving thanks to his name. But, when I say this, I do not mean that this is all ; for *to do good and communicate forget not* ; for with such sacrifices, God always was, and always will be, *well pleased*." Whether this, or something like it, be not the true scope of our author's argument, is submitted to better judgments.

If we understand this *text* in a *literal* sense, and allow of a *proper altar* in the *christian church* ; by just consequence, " we must " have a sacrifice, and *priests* to offer that " sacrifice." And no wonder, the *Melchisedecian priests*, who are greatly interested herein, are concerned to have it so understood. " I pray you, Reader, (says one of " them,) to take notice, that the apostle, by " *eating off*, or from the christian altar, " means eating *orally* (*i. e.* with the mouth) " a material sacrifice ; because, he says, the
Jews

“ *Jews* had no right to *eat* of the christian altar; because, by their own law, they were not to *eat* of a sin-offering. If he means an oral eating (*i. e.* with the mouth) in the one case, manifest it is, that he must mean the same, in the other: but we have no sacrifice, in the christian church, that can be eaten *orally* (*i. e.* with the mouth) but the sacrifice of the *Eucharist* alone, the sacrifice of bread and wine, &c.” Had this *writer* prayed his Reader to have blotted out the foregoing verse (*be not carried about with diverse and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats*, to be eaten orally (*i. e.* with the mouth) *which have not profited them, that have been occupied therein:*) before he had attempted to give him (what he calls) his “*plain construction of the text*”, he would have gained one considerable point.—But, even then, I would ask, in the person of a *Hebrew*, you say, “the christian sacrifice of the Eucharist is a sin-offering, a propitiatory oblation, to procure pardon, by virtue of the grand sacrifice:” How can you pretend that *your gospel* was *typified*, in our law; when that expressly *forbid* any part of a sin-offering, whose blood is brought into the holy place to reconcile withal, to be

2 *Sacrament of the Altar*, p. 59.

1 Lev. vi. 30.

eaten? *Wherefore did Jesus*, in conformity (you say) to our law, of burning, without the camp, the bodies of those beasts, whose blood was brought into the sanctuary, for sin, *suffer without the gate*, if you have a right to *eat and feast on his sin-offering*? The burning without the camp, in our propitiatory sacrifices, which you call the *type*, was prescribed, that it might *not* be eaten of: yours, to answer as *antitype*, suffered without the gate, but *to be eaten of*: what is this but a type and no type, likeness and no likeness?—But, to clear this passage of all obscurity, the judicious *reader* will please to observe (1.) That (as I intimated above) there was no literal altar to be used, in the grand expiatory sacrifices for the priest and people. The bodies, without the camp, were consumed upon the ground. *Lev. iv. 12. xvi. 27.* and the blood, within the vail, was sprinkled, before the mercy seat, on the floor. There was no altar erected in either place, or requisite to the service. (2.) If Christ conformed to this *pattern*, as it appears by *our author* he did, no literal, proper altar was used, or to be used, in his service; neither was there any thing *material*, not even his *cross*, whereon he suffered, that answered to a material, proper altar; much less can his *table*. (3.) Our author does not say, that we christians, who have this altar, have a right to eat of it:

it : but that *they*, the *Jewish priests*, who might and did eat of many sacrifices under the law, even they (much less the church in general) had no right to eat of such a sacrifice, as this of ours is. If I should say, “ We christians have a service, which “ priests have no right to deprave ; ” no sensible man would conclude, that we have a right to deprave it.—On the whole, this *text*, instead of affording any support to the doctrine of a *sacrifice* and *altar*, in the *Lord's supper*, is, considered in its connection, plainly and fully against it. *We have no feasts upon sacrifices* : If this be a *reproach*, let us bear it well, considering whose it is, namely, *the reproach of Christ*.

'Tis no difficult matter, to account for those usurpations, in the christian church, which constitute, as it is called, a *spiritual hierarchy*. After the death of the Apostles, *grievous wolves* soon appeared ; and, as they saw the *christian priesthood* was the common privilege of *all* christians, who were truly, in a peculiar and emphatical sense, God's *heritage*, or *clergy* ; their first attempt was to monopolize it to themselves : But, as the common right was too glaring to be totally suppressed, they had an expedient for a compromise ; and which they are still ready to propose, on all occasions of difference and dispute ; and it runs to this effect :

“ * All good christians shall be allowed, in a
 “ large sence, to be *sacrificers*, and so far
 “ *priests* unto God ; provided they allow us,
 “ *bishops* and *presbyters*, who are *commis-*
 “ *sioned officers* and *ambassadors in ordinary*,
 “ to be *priests* in the *peculiar* and *emphati-*
 “ *cal sence*.” i. e. We agree you shall be
 considered as *levites*, if you will be content
 and let us be *high-priests*. This expedient
 has succeeded with the bulk of Christians ;
 for who would reject a proposal made by
commissioned officers, and *ambassadors in or-*
inary, of Jesus Christ ?—And as MYSTERY
 (the first inscription in that *great city*, or
 society, which St. *John* saw, in his *apoca-*
lypse, to *ride*) is very prolific in inventions ;
 these *eminent priests* must, in the next place,
 of course, have the *tithes* for their *portion* ;
 and an *altar*, and a *sacrifice*, for their *mi-*
nistry. The *Jewish* law, tho’ abrogated,
 afforded them a pretext for the *former* ; the
 death of Christ, and his supper in memory
 of it, a colour for the *latter*. His *death*
 was, therefore, called *his sacrifice* ; what he
 first offered, in a *bloody* manner, on the
cross ; and what they continue to offer, in
 an *unbloody* manner, by bread and wine, at
 the *Lord’s table* ; which they therefore
 term *an altar*. To keep them in counte-
 nance, as oft as need requires, *Melchisedec* is

* See *Distinctions of Sacrifice*, p. 86, 87.

introduced, *offering bread and wine to Abraham*; but, unlucky for them, neither the *Jewish* historian, nor the *author to the Hebrews*, is in their secret. The former relates it thus: *And Melchisedec, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine.* Upon which a *very learned and worthy*[†] *prelate of the church of England* commenteth thus: “ This he did, as a *King*, not as a *Priest*; “ for it was not an act of religion, but of “ hospitality.—I think the plain sense is, “ that he treated *Abraham* and his followers, “ by causing provisions to be brought forth, “ for their refreshment, after the fight. For “ *bread and wine* comprehend all sort of “ provision for their repast: As to *eat bread* “ with another, in this book, is to *feast* “ with him, xliii. 25. And thus *Tertul-* “ *lian*, it is certain, understood it; who “ saith expressly, he brought them forth to “ *Abraham*, and offered them to him, not “ to God. And *Epiphanius* observes that “ the word in the *Greek* is not *be offered*, “ but *brought out*. So it seems his copy had “ it.” All that *Melchisedec* did, on record, as a priest, is, that *he blessed Abram and his God, and received of him the tithes of the spoil*. What kind of sacrifices he was wont to offer, whether the same, or different from those of other priests in the patriarchal age,

[†] *Patrick on Gen. xiv. 18.*

we know not. And, as for the author to the *Hebrews*, who professedly treateth of Christ's priesthood, and observes him in it to be *after the similitude of Melchisedec*; he, I say, takes no notice of this action of his, *of bringing forth bread and wine*; which it is not probable he would have omitted, had it been his *proper offering*, and a *figuration of the mysteries of Christ's sacrifice*. However, notwithstanding the profound silence both in the *Old and New Testament*, of what this eminent person was wont to offer to God, many of the fathers of the church have found it out; as doubtless they would have found, *who Melchisedec's father was*, had it been of equal use. I say, many fathers of the church have, it seems, found, that "He sacrificed no victims of flesh, or blood; but he dedicated a *sacrament*, in *bread and wine*, in the simple and pure *sacrifice of Christ*." And, from hence, we have *one celebrated distinction of sacrifice*, to wit, the *Melchisedecian*; towards a right conception of which, the *clergy of Middlesex* were assisted, by the late learned *Arch-deacon*^u, in his *visitation charge*. If the *Melchisedecian sacrifice* be what they would have it, "and infinitely preferable to all the *sacrifices of Aaron*;" I hope the *Melchisedecian divines* will allow that *the church of*

^u Vide Dr. Waterland's *Distinctions of Sacrifice*.

Salem was infinitely better provided for, than the Jewish church; as “*Melchisedec* feasted “himself, and them, directly upon the “grand sacrifice itself;” and not as Aaron did, “under the dark cover of a legal expiation, which but remotely and obscurely “pointed to it.” The *postulatum*, I ask, is natural, and will make *special* divinity.

In the church of Rome, no wonder, they call the Lord’s *table*, an *altar*; seeing they profess to believe that, by the *consecration* of the priest, the bread and wine is converted into the *real body and blood of Christ*, and is, by him, *offered*, as an *expiation* for all the *sins of the world*. How enormous is this faith, and how defamatory of Christ’s priesthood! I beg leave here to *observe*, that one main prop of that vast superstructure of *absurdity*, *superstition*, and *priestcraft*, which we see raised in that church, is this, to wit, *that the cross-sacrifice* (as it is called) *is the proper sacrifice of Jesus Christ*. Taking this for *granted*,—then the supper was instituted to be a memorial, or a true and full representation, or image, of the sacrifice of the cross:—Then the feat of the elements, *that is*, of the body and blood of Christ, that is, *of the grand sacrifice*, is an *altar*: Then he, who officiates at this altar, is a *priest*:—Then the priests of the new law partake of the royal priesthood of Jesus Christ; they exercise his priesthood and his power:—Then they

they need only pronounce a few words, and bread is no longer bread, nor wine, wine; but both are *transubstantiated* into the *very body and blood of Christ*:—Then they have the *channels of supernatural graces* in their custody, and are men of *infinite* importance:—Then he, who will not *reverence* a priest, is a *schismatick*, a *heretick*, and shall be *damned*! Thus error begetteth error, and one absurdity supporteth another; till *blasphemous fables* and *dangerous deceits*, *curled ambition* and a *diabolical spirit*, impudently struts on earth, under the sacred name of *the priesthood of Jesus Christ*; who, God knows, in this office, is HOLY, HARMLESS, UNDEFILED, SEPARATE FROM SINNERS, AND MADE HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS.

But there are some *uses* of a *practical nature*, which may be made, of this Discourse, with which I shall conclude.

First, We may learn hence to *esteem the true christian scheme, as infinitely preferable to the law of Moses, and to any scheme of religion in the world, in point of its high priesthood*. Let us consider *how great this man is*, who executeth this office; and, in whose person alone, it is immutably fixed. He is one, far surpassing Aaron and all the levitical tribe; greater than *Melchisedec*, to whom the patriarch, Abraham, payed tithes; yea, above Angels, he being, in a distinguished, peculiar sense, *the son of God, heir*
of

of all things, by whom also he made the worlds : the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his Father's person, who upholdeth all things by his Father's power. This, this is the Apostle, who first instituted, and is now become the High Priest of our profession.—Let us consider the place of his ministry. He is a priest, passed into heaven for us, to the throne of the Majesty on high, whereto he hath opened a way for our worship, without turning our bodies to the east, or paying any deference to altars, tabernacles, temples, and stately edifices, made with hands.—Let us consider his ministry, and the effects of it. He was faithful to him that appointed him, and duly discharged his office; doing that, by his one, living, self-sacrifice, which all the bloody sacrifices in the world could not procure. He saves or sanctifies, not in part, but perfectly and to the uttermost; not for a finite duration, but for ever : And he ever liveth to secure a holy freedom to his church and people.—Let us consider, that he discharges the functions of this office for us freely : 'Tis the heavenly gift, and obedience to him will entitle us to all its benefits, without money and without price. The thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, and even human sacrifices, that have been offered by priests in other religions, at the expence of the people, are here absolutely excluded and forbidden. Blessed be

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God

God for Jesus Christ!—The *Jewish religion* did not more excel the old *pagan*, than itself is excelled by the *christian*. Tho' the *Jews* had great advantages, and ground of hope toward God, by their priesthood; the proportion it bears to what we have by Christ, is, not that of an image, or copy, to an original, but that of a *shadow* to a *substance*.

Secondly, We may learn hence the obligations to gratitude and duty, which christians lie under, to Jesus Christ. His dignity cost him dear. He had a glory with the Father before the world was, and emptied himself of it; went thro' a tedious and painful exercise in flesh and blood, and endured a great fight of afflictions, from principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places; before he could make a spoil of them, and take the priesthood to himself. For the joy, that was set before him, in arriving at this saving office, to be the finisher, as he was the author of our faith, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now sat down at the right hand of the throne of God; having made reconciliation and obtained eternal redemption for us. By him it is, we have access into this grace, wherein we stand, as children of God, and rejoice in hope of a suitable glory.

Thirdly, Let us be excited steadily to adhere to Jesus, and to pursue the advantages of his ministry. Seeing that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus
the

the son of God, *let us bold fast our profession*, and oppose all men on earth, who dare encroach on his prerogatives, or vainly pretend, with their *sacrifices, benedictions and absolutions*, to exercise his priesthood and his power. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest, by faith in the blood of Jesus*;—a liberty given to every one of us who are *christians* to perform sacred service, in the divine presence; *by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil*; within which the *Jewish* high priest alone was allowed to worship; that is to say, a way to the immediate presence of God, *new made for us, by his flesh*, of which he partook, in common with us; and by his obedience and sufferings in which, he is seated at his Father's right hand: *And having in him an high priest over the house of God*; let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us employ no proxy, to transact our spiritual interests; but come, ourselves, *boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*.—Let our sacrifice be, an imitation and copy of that which Jesus offered, *a living, self-sacrifice*: Such is best expressive of true piety, and most acceptable to the God and father of all rational beings. *Therefore leaving the rudiments of the*

doctrine of the priesthood of Christ, which were (like as milk is suited to babes) adapted to the Jewish noviciate-state, let us go on unto perfection, and conform ourselves entirely to that service within the vail. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

In fine, Hence let us learn to guard our selves against any defection, or apostasy, from the christian religion. 'Tis an heavenly calling; a profession, that does unspeakable honour to the human nature. The high priest of this religion appears in the presence of God for us. To a true and upright heart let us join a firm and well grounded persuasion of his resurrection and glory; that full assurance of faith, which is absolutely requisite to our receiving the benefits of his ministry, or to the having our bodies and minds purified for communion with our supreme Father and God. Jesus has not only opened a free passage for our filial addresses to the throne of divine Majesty now, but as our forerunner is for us entred to prepare a place for our personal reception; that, where he is, we may be also. Let us then hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for he is faithful that promised—Let those be ashamed of Christianity, who make it a base

secular interest, a worldly kingdom; or who take the idle conceits of men for Christ's gospel, and the tricks of priests for his ministry: We have not so learned Christ.---A set of *absurd doctrines* and *cunningly devised fables*, invented and supported by *weak or crafty men*, under the guise of christian *mysteries*, may have a run with the commonality, and occasion the truth to be slighted, disesteemed, and evil spoken of: or the wild *enthusiasm, superstition, bigotry, and immoralities* of Christians, may bring the *profession* into contempt, with extravagantly *nice* people: but men, who have their senses rightly exercised, will distinguish things, and scorn to renounce their allegiance to Jesus, much less to *libel* his revelation upon account thereof. Shall the prevalence of fraud and imposture turn us from the truth? The abuse of Christ's name, induce us to dishonour and reject his gospel? Innovations in his worship, occasion us to deny and renounce what is pure, primitive, and apostolical? *Let us not forsake the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is.* The omission of public and social duties, among Christians, has an ill aspect and tendency.---Let us consider, to how deplorable a state and condition a defection from Christ and his gospel leadeth men. *There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall de-*

vour

vour the adversaries'. This, 'tis true, was spoken of those of the *Hebrews*, who after embracing the christian faith, *apostatized* therefrom. Upon the received principles of these men, God at *sundry times*, and in *divers manners*, spake unto the fathers by the *prophets*; and had given to their nation, in particular, a *system of laws* by *Moses*: So that they could not be prejudiced against *revelation* in general, as a thing impossible and absurd. 'Twas well known to them that *he, who despised Moses's law, died without mercy*; and therefore 'twas fitly recommended to their consideration, of *how much sorer punishment he should be thought worthy, who trode under foot the son of God*, treated him in a base contemptuous manner, and who counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, absolved from sin, and fitted to worship God acceptably, an *unholy thing*, common blood, or, what is worse, the blood of a *blasphemer* and *impostor*; and who did despite unto the spirit of grace, opposing its *testimony* to the truth of the gospel, by prophecy and miracles, with envy and malice. Their crime is of an enormous nature, and their punishment will be in proportion.

But there are some, who perhaps may not come under the name of *apostates*, as having never acknowledged the *baptismal* engagement; and yet cannot be distinguished

from the above *reflection*. Our age can produce those, that openly treat *the son of God* with indignity, who even ridicule that sacred character of his, and count his sufferings and death the just demerit of his pretensions to it; and who oppose the gracious spirit of God, that witnesseth to the truth of the christian scheme, and runs through the whole. Whether such will be persuaded, or not, their case is *deplorable*. Unreasonable doctrines, imposition, and priestcraft, let them oppose: but, in opposing Christ and his ministry, they oppose the *only means*, which God hath, or ever will ordain, to convey pardon and eternal life to them. Therefore it is, at their greatest peril and hazard, that *they crucify to themselves the son of God afresh, and put him to open shame*; or approve of, and, as it were, act over the very part, which the *Pharisees*, the *Saducees*, the *Priests*, and the *Jewish rabble* acted. *There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins*.—Christ will never repeat his course. They must either submit to, believe, and obey, his gospel; or, in the dark, uncomfortable state of nature and guilt, *perish* like the beasts, *without any rational, well grounded hope of pardon that issues in life and immortality*.

After this *melancholy reflection*, I cannot suppress one pleasure, which arises to my mind from the consideration that these men are secure in their *persons and properties* under the wise and good government of our *Sovereign*

reign Lord, King George. Their condition is bad, without the infliction of *fin*es and *imprisonments*, and *corporal punishments*. The high-priest of our profession wanteth no *force* from *civil* powers to support *his* ministry. If any will trample upon, and offer indignity to, this character, *the son of God*; will count the *blood* of the gospel-covenant *base* and *unholy*; and in spite of the *internal* and *external* evidences of the truth of the *christian religion*, will treat it with *contempt* and *buffoonry*; we must, after the example of our author to the *Hebrews*, leave them to him who hath said, *vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord: and again, the Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*^z.

Other things might be taken notice of; such as *the grounds* of those *dissentions* that are among *Protestants*, concerning the *priesthood* and *sacrifice of Christ*: The great reason there is to exercise *moderation*, *love* and *charity among themselves*; and *the like*; all which the judicious reader will collect himself. I close with saying, that, from *false notions* of the *Priesthood of Jesus Christ*, the devil has played more engines, and with greater success, against the spread of the *gospel*, than from all the quarters of ATHEISM and INFIDELITY.

^z Heb. x. 30, 31.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

FIRST VISION

OF

St. J O H N.

S H E W I N G

The particular FORMATION, NATURE,
and USE of the PROPHEPIC SCHEME
therein exhibited.

As for my Interpretation,—where I leave others and take a Way of mine own, I do it to maintain an Uniformity of Notion in the prophetic Schemes and Allegories throughout the Scripture; which, I am persuaded, were once no less familiar and usual to the Nations of the Orient, than our poetical Schemes and Pictures are to us. Mede's Works, Book IV. Ep. XIV.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN NOON, at the *White Hart*, near
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OPERATIONS

1870-1871

1870-1871

1870-1871

1870-1871

1870-1871

1870-1871

To the REVEREND
 ARTHUR ASHLEY SYKES, D. D.
 DEAN of St. *B E R I A N*.

Reverend S I R,

IF I am suspected of a Design, to recommend these Papers by prefixing to them your Name ; the Discouragements, to which the Publication of Things of this Sort is liable, may be an Apology.

So much Forgery and Imposture have been introduced into the World, under the specious Pretext of *Visions and Divine Revelations*, that every Thing of that Character is not only become questionable, but is actually fallen into Contempt with some Persons, as mere Illusions and impertinent Fancies, the proper Entertainment only of weak and credulous Minds.

And as to the Bulk of Believers, who cannot or who will not search after Truths of difficult Access, or to whom

any Degree of New Light in the Mysteries of the Sacred Books is offensive,—it cannot be expected such should desire to look into prophetic Schemes, or trouble themselves to distinguish the Visions of God from wild Reveries.

Incomprehensibility is a sort of Character some good People affix to whatever comes from God ; and as they, therefore, approve and admire the more the Things they do not understand ; an Attempt to explain and render hard Things intelligible, in Revelation, is highly distasteful to them ; and he, who attempts it, comes off well, if he does not incur their Displeasure.

But, whilst I recount Discouragements, I must not conceal the Favour I have met with, from some eminent Persons, in the Course of making these Observations. It bids fair for the spreading of Knowledge in the Scriptures, when able Divines will become Advocates for the Liberty of Prophecy, and will condescend to aid the Spirit of free Inquiry, in the Laity. This noble and generous Temper have
you,

DEDICATION. v

you, among others I have the Honour to know, who ground your Reputation, not on the Ignorance, but on the Instruction and Improvement of Mankind.

Your early Appearance for Liberty Civil and Religious : Your just Defence of the Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion : Your rational Vindication of the Truth of the Christian Religion in particular, and the many useful Lights you have thrown on several important Subjects relative thereto :—These, and other your Labours, joined with an uniform Conduct in Life, steady and consistent,—have justly procured you Veneration and Esteem from wise and good Men of all Parties. Even the ablest Adversary, that has appeared in this Age against Revelation, was pleased to observe, that, of all, who wrote against him, *you alone advanced a consistent Scheme of Things, which you proposed with great Clearness, Politeness, and Moderation.*

Prophecy and Miracles, conjoined, afford an Argument, in behalf of our
great

great Teacher and his Religion, which you, Sir, are perfectly Master of. As it is to your excellent Writings I owe my little Knowledge and Acquaintance with the State and Force of that Argument, you have a Right to my grateful Acknowledgments, and the best Title of any to these Papers.

When the prophetic Visions interspersed in our Sacred Books shall come to be examined with Accuracy, I do not doubt but a curious Composition and Structure, with such internal Marks of Wisdom and Goodness, will be conspicuous in them, as will be sufficient to distinguish real divine Inspiration from the Flights of a warm distempered Fancy, or the cunning Art of Man.

Whether the Method I have taken, in examining and strictly adhering to the Imagery and Ground-Plot in Vision, carefully avoiding of typical Senses and forced Allusions, be likely to promote a clear Discovery of the Notions, Natural or Moral, that this Part of *the Master-Piece of mystical Prophecy* (as it has been called) is intended to convey,

DEDICATION. vii

vey, is humbly and with all due Deference submitted.

Where I differ from you, or any other great and learned Person, I must plead the Privilege you grant to sober Inquiries into Subjects of a difficult and abstruse Nature, where Error is almost unavoidable. And if I am mistaken in some of my Conjectures, touching the *particular Formation, Nature, and Use of the prophetic Scheme exhibited in St. John's first Vision*; the Mistake will be excused, and the Person not thought worse of, by you; in whose Judgment and Practice, ALL KNOWLEDGE, and ALL MYSTERY, and ALL FAITH, is *Nothing to CHARITY*.

That you may long continue to adorn your Country, and the established Church, is the unfeigned Wish of,

Reverend Sir,

Your very obliged,

Most obedient

Humble Servant,

THOMAS MOORE.

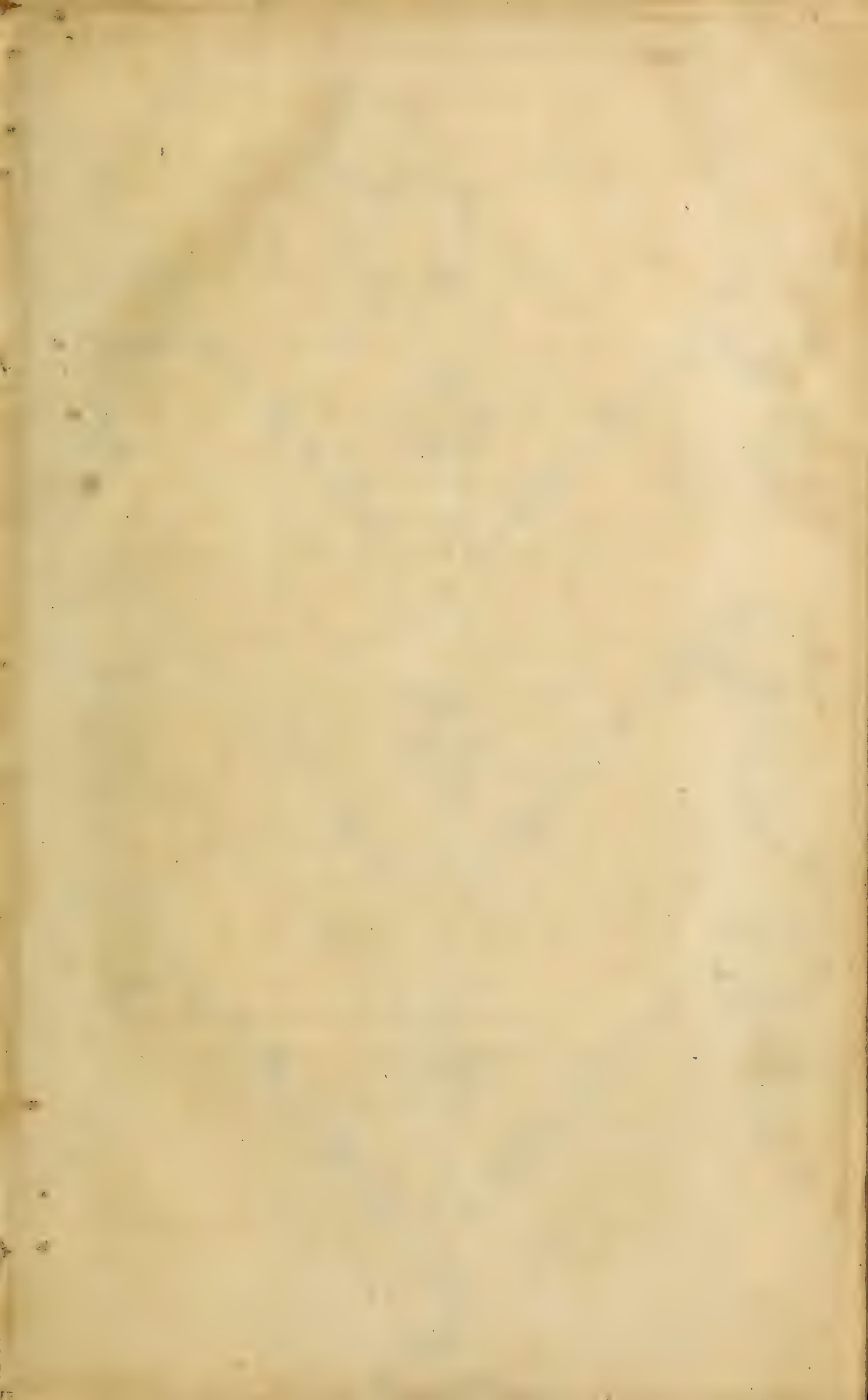
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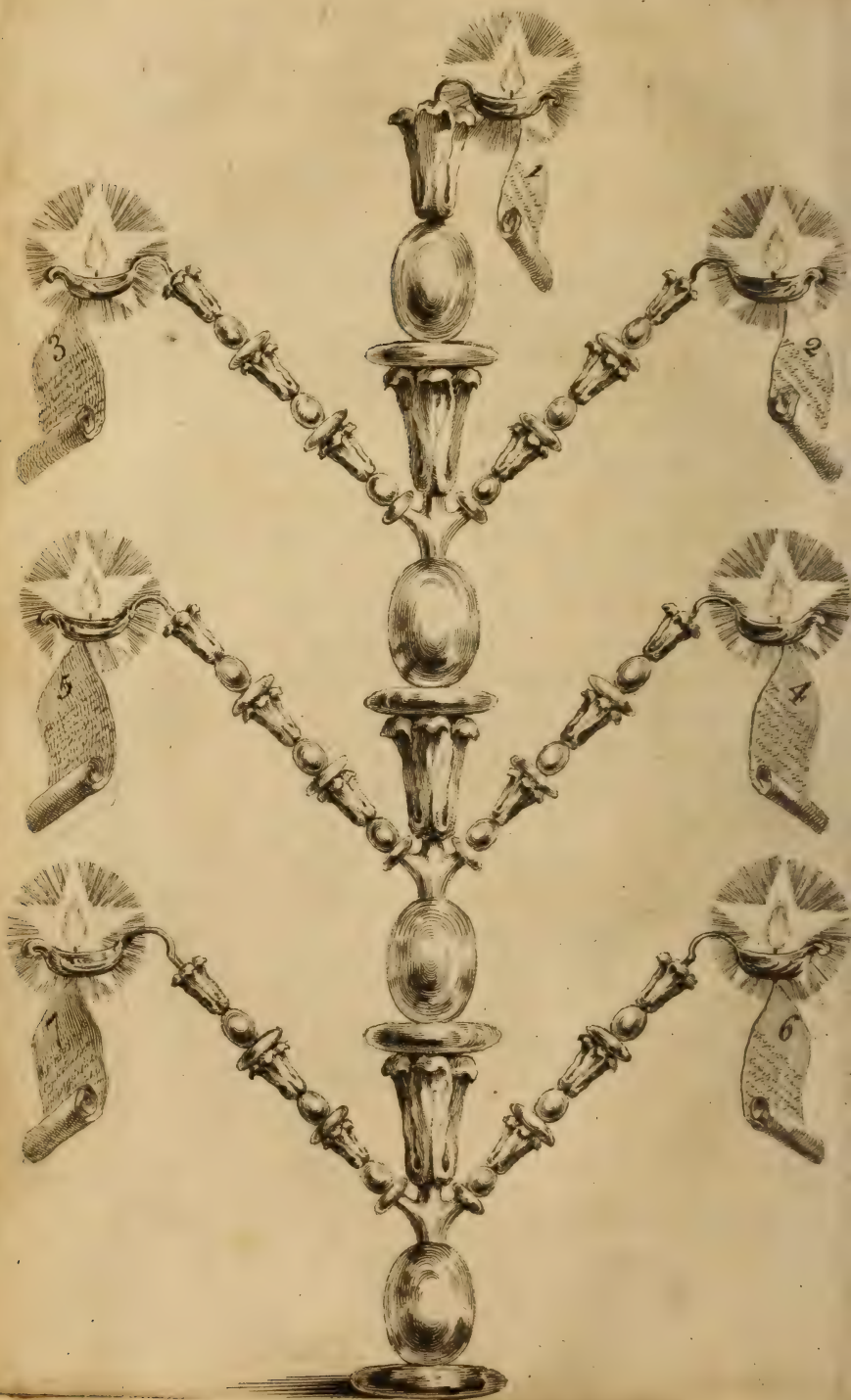
THESE Papers were drawn up, in order to have been published the Beginning of May; but as a Dissertation on Prophecy, with an Explanation of the Revelation of St. John, by the Lord Bishop of Clogher, was then in the Press; they were detained as what might possibly be rendered useless and unnecessary. But since his Lordship proceeds upon a Plan, which excepts the three first Chapters of the Revelation (the entire Subject of these Observations) from a strict prophetic Consideration, they may be suffered to appear; and the rather, as it is hoped they may in some Measure subserve the good Design of his Lordship, "to contribute towards making this Book of the Revelation to St. John more frequently read by the Learned, than it hath hitherto been." The Dissertation on the Olympic Games, which I have seen in the Interval, has given me great Pleasure. That learned and ingenious Writer (whose Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, sufficiently demonstrate his Regard to Revelation) will not be displeased at the Use I have made of his Writings.

October 11,

1749.

OBSER-





OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

FIRST VISION

OF

St. J O H N.

i. ON the first Day of the Week, more especially set apart for *Christian* Worship, called *the Lord's Day*; St. *John*, during his Exile in *Patmos*, an Island in the *Icarian* Sea, *was in the Spirit*; being, like some of the ancient Prophets, *Ezek. xi. 24. xxxvii. 1*, in an extraordinary Way and Manner *, presented with a

B *Vision,*

* As to the *Manner* of a *Divine Rapture*, whether the Images of Things are caused to appear to the external Senses, or to the Mind only, we know not : And in respect to this Point, it seems, St. *Paul* himself could not tell the *Manner* of his Visions and Revelations, whether what he *saw* and *heard*, was in and by the Organs of the Body, or without it's Instrumentality, *2 Cor. xii. 2, 3*. Neither is it of any Consequence to us, as long as we are certain,

2 Observations on the first Vision

Vision, the noblest Kind or Degree of prophetic Revelation.

2. This *Vision* was ushered in with Solemnity, by a *great Voice*, strange and awful, like the Sound of a Trumpet, expressing the singular Dignity of the Person speaking, and particular Instruction to certain Churches which the Vision concerned: *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last* *: *And what thou seest write in a Book, and send it unto the seven Churches which are in Asia ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea, Chap. i. 10, 11.*

certain, St. *John* retained a sound Mind, or was not deprived of his Reason, and other Faculties of Sense and Perception, which were all rationally conversant about the Objects he was presented with. Here was nothing like a temporary Madness or Divination by Fury, as it was called among the *Gentiles* ; nor were Distortions, and Convulsive Agitations of the Body, necessary to the Part he acted, in receiving and giving the Revelation, as we shall see in the Sequel.

* “ That is, before whom no Man ever was that which I am, nor ever shall be; who neither had any Predecessor, nor shall have any to succeed me. This is a Phrase taken out of *Isa. xli. 4*, where it is used of God the Father. It is explained in the same Prophet, *Chap. xliii. 10. xliv. 6*. God seems to have had Respect to the Opinion of the *Heathens*, who feigned Successions of Gods, of which some came and dethroned others, and reigned in their stead, and which seems to have prevailed among the Eastern Nations, as it did among the *Greeks*”. *Vid. Le Clerc in Loc.* In this Sense Christ, the Person represented speaking, is *the first and the last*, the only one of his Order and Dignity.

3. The

3. The *Scene* of Vision, or Place where St. *John* thought himself to be, was, probably, that Part of the Sanctuary, called *the first Tabernacle*, *Heb. ix. 2.* where the Service of God, in the *Jewish Church*, was daily performed in the Wilderness: And in this, the principal Things which he saw, or the most remarkable Objects presented to his View, were such as appertained to this Holy Place, namely, *seven golden Candlesticks, and one like unto the Son of Man, in the Midst, habited like the High-Priest, v. 12, 13.*

4. The *seven golden Candlesticks* seem manifestly correspondent to the *Golden Lamp-Sconce*, which was placed on the South Side of the Tabernacle, over-against the Table of Shew-Bread, *Exod. xxv. 31. xxvi. 35.* and which afforded the Sanctuary all its Light. And tho' it was *but one beaten Work of pure Gold, Exod. xxxvii. 22,* it is here beheld, by St. *John*, in its several Parts, or Branches, as *seven golden Candlesticks.*

5. As for the Make of this *Lamp-Sconce*, it consisted of a *Shaft* or *Trunk*, in which were *four Bowls*, made like unto *Almonds*, with their *Knops* and their *Flowers*; out of the Sides whereof issued *six Branches*, e. i. *three Branches of the Candlestick out of the one Side, and three Branches of the Candlestick out of the other Side*; a Knop being under every *two* of the *six Side-Branches, Exod. xxv.* (which Sides, according to its Position in the *Tabernacle*, stood East and West;) and one, which

4 *Observations on the first Vision*

was the *middle Branch*, arose from the uppermost *Bowl*, and was at the Top of the Shaft, or main Trunk.

6. If these Branches were alike, *i. e.* of equal *Length* and *Size*, as it should seem they were, by the like *three Bowls, Knops, and Flowers*, to each Branch, *Exod. xxv. 33.* they could not meet in a Line at Top, as they are generally represented in *Cuts*, (Vid. *Blome's, Calmet's, Houbraken's, &c.*) but the Heads of the two, which issued from the lowermost, which, by way of Distinction, I shall call the *first Knop* in the Shaft, were beneath those that issued from the *second*, and the Heads of those from the *second* were beneath those from the *third*, and that which arose upright from the *fourth Knop* in the Shaft was elevated above them all *.

7. As

* I own the *Candlestick* described on *Titus's Triumphal Arch*, as well as that mentioned by *Josephus, Antiq. B. iii. Chap. vi.* may be an Objection; since that, according to *Mr. Whiston*, "terminated in seven Heads, in one Row, " all standing parallel to one another." Whether that answers the Model of *Solomon's Candlesticks*, I cannot tell; it does not this of *Moses*. *Moses* speaks only of *three Sorts* of Ornaments on his, *Bowls, Knops, and Flowers*; whereas *Josephus* mentions a *fourth*, viz. *Pomgranates*, which perhaps were the proper Form of the *Knops*. Besides, *Josephus* himself, *B. vii. of the War, Chap. v.* concerning the *Candlestick* that was carried in Triumph at *Rome*, says, " its " Construction was now changed from that which we made " use of. For its middle Shaft was fixed upon a *Basis*: and " the small Branches were produced out of it to a great " Length: having the Likeness of a *Trident* in their Position."

7. As for the other *Object of Vision*, a Personage in human Figure, or Shape, in the Midst of the spreading Branches of the Candlestick, it is plainly answerable to *Aaron*, or one of his Sons, when officiating in the Sanctuary; when they stood, as they were appointed, *to light the Lamps and dress or trim them there. Exod. xxx. 7, 8. Levit. xxiv 3, 4.* He appears, therefore, habited like a Priest, nay and even an High-Priest, he being *cloathed with a Garment down to the Foot, and girt about the Paps with a golden Girdle.* A Description of the Robe of the Ephod, and the curious Girdle interwoven with Gold, mentioned *Exod. xxxix,* which the High-Priest wore in the Sanctuary.

8. There was, however, something very extraordinary, awful, and glorious in this Personage, which St. *John* took a particular Notice

“ tion ” I am not concerned to reconcile *Josephus*, in these two Places ; but desire the judicious Reader to observe from the last, that in the *Basis* of the *Candlestick*, and the Position of it's Branches *Trident-like*, chiefly consisted the *Change* of it's Construction. Yet this is the Form generally retained in *Cuts*. If what I have attempted to describe, from the sacred Text, come nearest to the *Pattern shewn to Moses in the Mount*, it will have the Preference with those who judge of Truth by another Rule than that of commonly received Notions. I am aware but of one Difficulty, *Viz.* How it could well be supported without a larger Basis? And if we suppose a Spindle fixed in the Floor, whereon the Trunk of the Candlestick was placed, that Difficulty will be removed. The *Tenons, Pillars,* and *Sockets*, &c. by which the Appurtenances of the Tabernacle were conjoined and supported, may give this Supposition some Degree of Probability.

6 *Observations on the first Vision*

Notice of, and which, indeed, greatly distinguished him from all the Priests of the *Jewish Church* ; *his Head and his Hair were white like Wool, as white as Snow* ; which was the *Likeness* of the *Ancient of Days* ; see *Dan. vii. 9.* (and, therefore, is a fit emblematical Character expressive of *his Son and Image*, *Heb. i. 3.*) what follows seems also to correspond with *Daniel's great Vision* of a certain *Man*, see *Chap. x. 5*, *his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire*, clear and piercing ; *his Feet were like unto Fine, or polished Brass*, glowing as if they burned in a *Furnace* (an Emblem of great Purity) and *his Voice was as the Sound of many Waters*, i. e. emphatically great and important, *v. 14, 15.*

9. This august Personage, *in the Midst of the seven golden Candlesticks*, was in a peculiar and proper Station and Posture ; *having in his right Hand seven Stars* : and out of his Mouth went a *sharp two-edged Sword* : and his Countenance was as the *Sun shineth in his Strength*, *v. 16.*

10. The *seven Stars* were, probably, the *Lights* of the *Lamps*, ascending from the Branches, which, from their Position and Structure, exhibited a glorious Appearance, not much unlike a *Constellation of Stars*. See *No. 6.* and the *Plate* prefixed. It is certain, the *Lamps* were to be distinguished from the *Candlestick*, or from the several Branches on which they were placed, see *Exod. xxv. 37.* and were, probably, made of other Materials. *Calmet* says (*Dict. L. A. M.*) they were Crystal Glasses

Glasses filled with Oil, and fixed upon the Branches of the Candlestick. And *Josephus*, speaking of this Candlestick, says, that “ from
 “ a simple Basis it exalted itself to a vast Height,
 “ launching out in its Structure into as many
 “ Branches, as, according to Report, there are
 “ *Planets* together with the Sun. And that it
 “ put forth also seven Heads by one and the
 “ same Series at equal Distances disposed; in
 “ which were placed Candles (or Wicks) to
 “ diffuse a Light, in each Head *seven*, corre-
 “ sponding to the Number of the *Planets*”. Vid. *Court’s* Translation of *Josephus*, *Antiq. B. iii.* Chap. vi. By this Account of *Josephus*, each *Lamp*, thus pointed into seven Flames, must gleam like a *Star*; and the Lamps being compared to the Number of the Planets, in his Time, strengthens this Observation, that the *lighted Lamps* were the *seven Stars* * of this Vision.

II. If the *seven Stars* were so many independent luminous Bodies, it would be difficult to conceive how this venerable Personage *held*
 them

* The High-Priest’s daily Business in the Holy Place, under the Law, was to dress and light the Lamps, rather than to walk about the Candlestick, which was only subservient to the Holding them forth. Now, if the seven Stars were a distinct Appearance, we are not certain there were any Lamps in Vision, but rather the contrary. When this is duly considered, it heightens the Probability, that the Stars, here spoken of, were no other than the Lamps which appeared under that high Figure and Notion to the Eye and Mind of St. *John*.

8 *Observations on the first Vision*

them *in* his Hand. But, on the above Supposition, it is easily accounted for, *viz.* as he stood *in the Midst of the Candlestick*, his right Hand had hold of the main Shaft which supported the Branches with their Lights. Sir *Isaac Newton* had the like Thought, where he says, “ On the first Day of the seventh Month, “ in the Morning, the High-Priest dressed the “ Lamps : And in Allusion hereunto, this “ Prophecy begins with a Vision of one like “ *the Son of Man* in the High-Priest’s Habit, “ appearing as it were in the Midst of the seven “ golden Candlesticks, or over-against the “ Midst of them, dressing the Lamps, which “ appeared like a Rod of seven Stars in his “ right Hand”. Vid. *Observations upon the Prophecies.* p. 255.

12. It will be no great Objection hereto, that he, who holdeth the seven Stars in his right Hand, is said to *walk in the Midst of the seven golden Candlesticks*, Chap. ii. 1. since the spreading Branches admitted of his Appearing *in the Midst* of them, and of *Walking* too, as that Phrase is expressive of his Motion in his Service, which was to go from Lamp to Lamp till the whole was dressed : For, till this began, he did not appear *walking*. Besides, to *walk in*, signifies, in the Prophetic Language, to *move with*, or to *attend on*, as *Jehovah* is said to do, on the *Israelites*, in the Wilderness, *Levit.* xxvi. 12. which is applicable to the *Christian Church*, 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. and here to *Christ* with it, “ who “ will enlighten, guide, and protect it”. *Waple.*

13. Now

13. Nor is the Posture of holding the Shaft in his *right Hand*, to be objected to, as unfit for the Service of Trimming the Lamps, since equivalent to the *Golden Snuffers*, which the *Aaronical* Priests were wont to use on the Occasion, was a *sharp two-edged Sword*, which went out, as if formed by the Words, of the *Mouth** of the Person in Vision; an Instrument, this, fitted to pierce, divide, and cut either Way, as he pleased, and an Emblem of the powerful Word of God, *Heb. iv. 12.*

14. St. *John* moreover discovered a most refulgent Brightness in the Personage presented to him in Vision, and Splendors transcendently glorious, inherent in, and issuing as from, himself; *his Countenance was as the Sun shineth in his Strength*, darting Beams of Light and Influence all around him †.

15. No Wonder, therefore, St. *John* should be struck with Dread, and so far overpowered as to faint, and swoon away, at such an Appearance. So majestic a Priest, with like Qualifications and Furniture, never was seen before: *When I saw him, I fell at his Feet as dead.*

C

16. How-

* As the Text does not say, He *held* the Sword in his *Mouth*, I suppose it to be formed, waved and directed, by what he uttered.

† The Attitude of this glorious and Priest-like Form, in the Midst of the spreading Branches, I imagine to be somewhat sideways, his right Hand to the Shaft of the Candlestick, and his left Hand outwards; and St. *John* so seated on the Floor, before him at a small Distance, as, on turning about his Head, to *see after the Voice*, to behold at once all the *Apparatus*.

10 *Observations on the first Vision*

16. However, he soon found, to his Comfort, that the sublime Dignity of this Personage did not elevate him above Compassion. He kindly raised and supported the Apostle in his Extasy: for, letting go his Hold of the Stock or Shaft of the Golden Lamp-Sconce, *he laid his right Hand* (which before held the seven Stars) *upon me*, saith St. John, *saying unto me, Fear not*, v. 17.

17. As St. John was greatly surprized, no doubt he was equally solicitous to know *who* the Person in Vision was. And as, probably, he had not Courage and Boldness enough to ask, the Person which appeared seems voluntarily to have given him the following Intimation, *to wit*, that he was (or did represent and personate) a Priest of a very eminent and singular Order: *I am the first and the last*; one, who was of great and distinguishing Note in the Church; *I am he that liveth, even tho' I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.*—and, who was now invested with Power in the highest Degree; *and I have the Keys of Hell * and of Death*, v. 18. St. John could not fail of applying these Characters to his Lord and Master, nor miss in the Application.

18. It

* *Hades*. “ Literally it signifies, but *what we see not*, “ or *what is out of our Sight*. And as the Word of which “ it is compounded signifies also *to know*, as well as *to see*, “ it may further signify *that State of Things which lies* “ *without the Compass of our Knowledge*.” *Vid. Howe's Discourse concerning the Redeemer's Dominion*, p. 8.

18. It is certain, this was not an Appearance of *Jesus Christ* in his own proper Shape or Form, nor an exact Similitude of him. The Disciple, who lay in his Bosom, was too well acquainted with him to be so greatly terrified, and Death-struck, at the Sight of him. After his visible Ascension; recorded *Acts* 1st. *Jesus, whom the Heaven must receive until the Times of Restitution of all Things*, himself never properly and personally appeared perhaps to any one. In the subsequent Vision which St. *John* saw, where the Scene is changed, *Jesus* is represented by the Hieroglyphic of a *Lamb*: *I beheld, and lo, in the Midst of the Throne, and of the four Beasts, and in the Midst of the Elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven Horns and seven Eyes*, Chap. v. 6. The seven Horns, issuing forth, one over each Eye, formed a *Crown* on the Head of the *Lamb*. A most strong and lively Image, and Emblem, of perfect Innocence rewarded, and governing with Knowledge and Power! This is the Object which, St. *John* saw, was worshipped by *four and twenty Elders, and the Beasts, and many Angels, in Number ten thousand Times ten thousand, and Thousands of Thousands*, v. 11. And under which *Device* *Jesus* is finely represented as disclosing, and executing, all the Purposes of God, in the Church and World, down to that Period of Time called *the Marriage of the Lamb*, Chap. xix. There, indeed, begins a *new* Scene, and *Jesus* is again represented by a *human FORM*,

12 *Observations on the first Vision*

very awful and glorious, see v. 11,-17. But neither is that a real Appearance of *Christ* himself in human Shape.

19. If it be then asked, what we shall call the *human Likeness*, that here personated Jesus Christ? I answer, *his Angel*. It was a Messenger sent by him, to St. *John*, to discover his Care and Regard for the Churches, as their royal Head and Prophet. *He sent and signified it by his Angel unto his Servant John, Chap. i. 1.*

20. The extraordinary Appearance and splendid Imagery, presented before St. *John*, were sufficient to demand his Attention to the important End to which it was directed, as well as to excite his Obedience to the more explicit Order he received to note and particularize the Vision: *Write the Things which thou hast seen*, or, take a particular Account of the Imagery presented to thine Eye; *and the Things which are designed to be thereby represented to the Understanding; and the Things which shall be hereafter heard and dictated to thee by way of moral Use and Instruction, v. 19*.*

21. And,

* The Vision, which St. *John* is again bid to *write*, is here particularly divided into *Things past, present, and future*. (1.) *Write the Things which thou HAST seen*, or what had been the Object of his Senses, the *great Voice*, the *golden Candlesticks*, the *Likeness of the Son of Man in the midst, with the seven Stars*. (2.) *Write the Things which ARE*, or the Mystery of the Things seen, to wit, *the seven Stars ARE the Angels of the seven Churches, and the seven Candlesticks which thou sawest ARE the seven Churches*. (3.) *Write the Things which shall be HEREFTER* or what follows

21. And, for the more easy Comprehension of the Subject, St. *John* hath a *Key* given him. What he *saw*, or *the Things* he had *seen*, is intituled to him, THE MYSTERY †; denoting somewhat

follows touching the Angel of each respective Church, to wit, *unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus, write, These Things, &c.* Do not these three different and distinct Parts evidently belong to *this* Vision? If this be granted, the Application of them to the whole *Book of the Apocalypse* is, in this Place, *wrong*. To which *wrong* Application, I conceive, it is chiefly owing, that our best *Commentators* have slid over the *three first Chapters* as over Matters *purely Historical*; nor feeling themselves on prophetic Ground, nor nicely regarding the Grandeur and Propriety of the Images which are obvious all the Way. That I may appear less pertinacious in differing from my Superiors, and in restraining this *Distinction of Things* to the *first Vision*, and, if possible, obviate an Objection that may be made, from *Chap. iv. 1.* I add, that I find the learned Dr. *Wells*, from the *Alexandrian* and many other *MSS.* and ancient Versions, has corrected the *English Translation* in both Places, reading them thus: *Chap. i. 19, Write therefore the Things which thou hast seen, and the Things which are, and the Things which shall be AFTER THEM.* *Chap. iv. 1, Come up hither, and I will shew thee Things which must be AFTER THIS.* In the Former, THE THINGS which shall be AFTER THEM, are what relate to the *Stars* and *Candlesticks*, and must, I think, be meant of the *Epistles* unto them, and could have been understood of nothing else, if the Book had ended with the *third Chapter*. In the Latter, THE THINGS which shall be AFTER THIS, relate to the *Time* of that Vision, and respect *Events* absolutely *future*.

† This Title, as well as the Use of the mystical Characters and Images, that after occur, is sufficient, one would think, if not to set wholly aside the *literal and historical Hypothesis*, to shew at least, that there is *something prophetic* in the *three first Chapters* of *this Book*. Whether

14 *Observations on the first Vision*

what of the *Nature* and *Kind* of this *prophetic Vision*; that secret Wisdom was veiled under the *Figures*, which were designed as *Emblems*, or *symbolical Characters*, expressive of other Things: And the particular Explication, or *Key*, whereof, is this, *the seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches, and the seven Candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches*, v. 20.

22. By this it is plain, the seven Stars and the seven golden Candlesticks are *mystical Characters*. But the *Key* has Difficulties which will not a little perplex us, without a particular Observation thereof, and a nice Adjustment of the Signs to the Things signified.

23. In order, therefore, to keep clear of all Difficulties, we observe, from No. 10, 11, that the *Lights* on the Branches, by which the Holy Place was illuminated, were wont to be compared to, or appeared to St. *John* like, a *Constellation of Stars*. Now these Stars are called *Angels*. This is agreeable to the Doctrine of some of the most ancient Philosophers, and Mystagogues, who ascribed *Spirits* to the *Stars*, as the *Chinese* do at this Day. A Doctrine favoured by the Poetic Language of the sacred Books, in which Language, or Style, all *Prophecies* are given. Thus in *Job*. xxxviii. 7. *When the Morning Stars sang together, and all*

ther those Commentators, who have strictly adhered to the *typical and prophetic Hypothesis*, in their various Explications of these Chapters, have, indeed, yet discovered the *Mystery*, it becomes not me to say.

the

*the Sons of God shouted for Joy. And Judg. v. 20. They fought from Heaven, the Stars in their Courses fought against Sisera. Hence they are called the Host of Heaven **. (N. B. *Host* signifies an *Army*, and is applied in Scripture to a Multitude of People assembled, either *civil* or *religious*, comp. *Exod. xxxviii. 8. Numb. ii. 4. Dan. viii. 8, 13.*) And a *Star*, and an *Angel*, are Characters for the *same* Subject, *Rev. ix. 1, 11.* infomuch that we read of *mighty Angels in flaming Fire, 2 Thess. i. 7. He maketh his Angels Spirits, his Ministers a Flame of Fire, Psal. civ. 4. Heb. i. 7.* Here is, then, no more of the Marvellous and Wonderful than the Subject was wont to bear among the Orientals: *The Stars are Angels.*

24. *The seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches.* The Word, *Angel*, is, originally and properly, a Name of Office †, and not

* The *Host* or *Stars of Heaven*, in God's Promise to *Abraham, Gen. xv. 5*, were made Signs and Types of his Posterity. Before their Passage out of *Egypt*, they were called, by God, *mine Armies*, and *the Hosts of the Lord, Exod. vi. 26. vii. 4. xii. 41.* A Character after appropriated to their numerous *Assemblies*, of Worship, as well *People as Priests, Exod. xxxviii. 8. Numb. iv. 23.* Wherefore I incline to think *the Assemblies*, in the *Synagogues* and *Temple*, are represented, *Dan. viii. 10*, by the *Host of Heaven*, and *the Stars*, some of which the little *Horn* of the *He-Goat* cast down, and stamped upon them: and the rather, because *v. 12*, it is said, *and an Host was given against the Daily.* This was verified in *Antiochus Epi-*

† *Chambers's Cyclopædia.*

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not of Nature. In the *Pagan Theology*, or Doctrine of *Dæmons*, every Nation and People had their Tutelary or Guardian Angels, to preside over and protect them. The *Septuagint* are supposed to countenance this Notion, who read *Deut. xxxii. 8.* thus: *When the Lord separated the Sons of Adam, he set the Bounds of their Habitation according to the Number of the Angels of God **. And it is certain, the Bulk of the *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, fancied that even *particular Persons* had their *Genii* or Angels. But be that as it may. Our present Concern is with *Revelation* and *Vision*. And if we enquire, *what Office* Angels, *therein*, *sustain*? We shall find them to be, not necessarily *literal*, or real and substantial, but *symbolical*, *Beings*: *i. e.* they stand not for themselves, but do *signify* and *represent* other *Beings*, or *Subjects*, whose Angels they are said to be. Thus, the *Angel of the Lord*, that appeared to *Moses*, at the Bush, *Exod. iii*, personated *God most High*: and, in *Israel's* Journey out of *Egypt*, it is said, the

phanes, who put a Garrison in the City of *David*, to overlook the Sanctuary, and suppress the Worship of God there, *1 Macab. i. 33.* By the *Prince of the Host*, *v. 11*, the *Jewish* Rulers or *High Priest* might be intended; but their Emblems were, I think, of an higher Orb, the *Sun* or *Moon*.

* In Times past, all Cities had their *Genius's*, in Honour of whom Temples and Images were erected; see *Euseb. B. concerning the Martyrs of Palestine, Chap xi.* with *Vales.* Note (q). Yea, every Place, whether *Wood*, *Mountain*, or *River*, had its *Genius*, to whom Rites of Worship, in the *Gentile Superstition*, were usually paid.

Lord

Lord went before them, that is, by *his Angel*, in a Pillar of Cloud and of Fire, Chap. xiii. 21. xiv. 19. In all those Appearances, *the Angel of God* was *his Representative*, and sustained the Name, Title, and Authority of *Jehovah* himself; and was known and distinguished by *the Angel of his Presence*, Exod. xxiii. 21. Isa. lxiii. 9. Again; in a Vision of *Zachariah's*, the *Angel of the Lord*, before whom (the Body of *Moses*, or the Levitical Constitution, under the Symbol of) *Joshua the High Priest* stood, represented *the Lord*, Chap. iii. 1, 2. And the Lord said unto Satan (who stood at *Joshua's* right Hand to resist him) *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: tho'*, by good Authority, he, who said thus, was *Michael the Archangel*, Jud. v. 9. In this *Book of the Revelation*, the Son of God has *his Angel*, see No. 18, 19, who appears for, represents, and personates *him*, and assumes all *his* glorious Qualities and Attributes, Chap. i. 17, 18. So, also, great and illustrious Bodies have *their Angels* to represent and personate them. Thus, in the *Book of Daniel* (the first of the inspired Writings wherein a Name is given to an *Angel*) it is said of *Michael*, the great Prince, that he standeth for the Children of *Daniel's People*, Chap. xii. 1. i. e. this is the emblematic Character, in that Vision, of the People of *Israel*, as the Prince of the Kingdom of *Persia* is the emblematic Character of the *Persian People*, Chap. x. 13, 21. And so here, the seven Asiatic Churches have their seven An-

D

gels,

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gels, who stand for, represent, and personate, them, in *this Vision*, and who are charged with all their Affections and Tempers. This is so very clear, *that the Angels of the Churches represent the Churches*, that what, in this Vision, is written *unto the Angels*, is expressly said to be *what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*. It is from *Vision* and *Revelation* we must learn the *Notions* of Prophecy; and the Terms and Expressions made use of by *Daniel* will help us naturally to open and explain *St. John's Apocalypse*. But to proceed with our *Key*.

25. *The seven Stars are the Angels of the seven Churches*, i. e. symbolically (as we have above shewn) these *stand for* and *represent* the Churches;) and *the seven Candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches*, i. e. symbolically too.* The main Question arising here is, Why are these mystical Characters *twofold*? Certainly, not to puzzle and perplex an honest Enquirer. A Revelation, not to be understood, is, properly, *no Revelation*. But as human Language has it's Defects, and one Term is not expressive

* The Involving and Expressing of the *same Subject* under *two* different Symbols, if not sufficiently signified by the Title given, (*the Mystery of the seven Stars and the seven golden Candlesticks*, v. 20.) does, however, appear by the *Use* that is made of each Symbol. *Skill* and *Artifice*, in a prophetic Scheme of Revelation, is no more an Objection to its being of God, than the like is in the Works of Nature; especially as it is not calculated merely to surprize, and excite Curiosity, but answers other valuable Purposes.

of all Properties in a Subject ; so have Symbols their Defects. Hence the *two Witnesses*, in another Vision, *Chap. xi. 4*, have a twofold Character. To apply this to the Symbols before us : *e. g.* The *golden Candlesticks* bear no Similitude of *Intelligence*, but as they hold forth *Light*, and, separate from that Use, are not *adequate* Images of the Churches. They are passive Subjects, wrought according to a certain Model ; and tho' they bespeak Wisdom and Design in their Formation, and may be Emblems of well-compacted Bodies, yet they fall short of being compleat Symbols *when*, and for *whom*, Action and Perception are to be represented, as in this *Vision*. Here the Churches were to appear properly *active* as in a *Drama* ; and, to that End, as having each a distinct Personality. Now *Light*, in the Scripture Style, fitly denotes an *animating* Principle ; whence we read of the *Light* or *Lamp* of Israel, which *the Men of David* feared would be *quenched* in his Death, *2 Sam. xxi. 17.* and *Light* is put for the *Understanding* or *Judgment*, even for the most perfect, *Matt. vi. 23. 1 John i. 5.* And no Character can, perhaps, better *personate* Churches, than that of *Angels* ; Beings, of an heavenly Order and Original, whose Office of Power and Trust, in the Government of the World, has generally been thought great. If it be then asked, *What do the Candlesticks peculiarly denote ?* We must remember, *the seven Candlesticks* only are to be considered that were the *Object* of Vision. Any seven Candlesticks

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will not serve to open and explain the Subject. *The seven Candlesticks WHICH THOU SAWEST are the seven Churches.* These are specially to be regarded, which were *made after the Pattern shewed to Moses on the Mount.* Neither the Purity of the Metal, nor general Use of the Candlesticks, seem so much to the Purpose of a *Key to the Mystery*, as their particular *Shape and Formation.* And what is peculiarly denoted, and pointed out, by *these seven*, is, the *Construction, Order, and Regularity*, of the *Scheme in Vision.* This will appear as we go on. The Sum is, Angels and Candlesticks are *Joint-Symbols.* The Churches being to be personated, informed, and directed,—that is done by ascribing *Intelligence and Volition* to the Lights on the Branches, and calling them *Angels*: Under which Name, or Notion, each Church is collectively considered, and addressed to, in the following Inscription, UNTO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH, which is common to every *epistolary Section.* This Observation will easily account for any *Transition* we may meet with, in those *Sections*, from the *Singular* to the *Plural* Number, as *Chap. ii. 10, 14, 15. iii. 1, 5.*

26. It must not be concealed that the learned “ Dr. *Prideaux* * observes, that the Ministers
“ of the Synagogue, who officiated in offering
“ up the public Prayers, being the Mouth of
“ the Congregation, delegated from them, as
“ their Representative, Messenger or Angel, to
“ speak to God in Prayer for them, was there-

* *Connection*, Vol. I. p. 388. 6th Edition.

“ fore in the *Hebrew Language* called *Sheliach*
“ *Zibbor*, that is, *the Angel of the Church.*” But
that the Name and Notion of *Angel*, here, is
borrowed from the *Synagogue*, rather than from
Moses and the Prophets, few that are acquainted
with the prophetic Writings, and the Connecti-
on between those of the New and the Old Te-
stament, will, I believe, yield their Assent unto.
— Certain it is, the *Lamp* (here called a *Star*,
and *Angel*) was appropriated to a *Church*, as
ITS Sign: “ In the *Greek Church* (saith Mr.
“ *Daubuz*, p. 107) in the Consecration of a
“ Bishop, among other symbolical Ceremonies,
“ there was a *Lamp* delivered to him represent-
“ ing his Church, and to the Patriarch of Con-
“ stantinople a double Lamp, signifying the Pa-
“ triarchal Church, which was delivered to him
“ by the Emperor.” And the Churches of the
Vaudois have for their mysterious Device, saith Mr.
Waple, p. 48, a *lighted Taper in a Candlestick*. The
Ground or Reason whereof may be derived from
our Lord’s Discourse on the Mount: *Ye are the*
Light of the World. A City, that is set on an Hill,
cannot be hid. Neither do Men light a Candle, and
put it under a Buskel, but on a Candlestick, and
it giveth Light unto all that are in the House.
Let your Light so shine, &c. Matt. v. 14, 15,
16. We will only observe farther, that if it
were true, that the Angels were the Ministers
and Pastors * of the Churches, an Objection
to

* The *Gentile Churches*, in their Infancy, don’t seem
to have been under the Rule and Government of *stated*
Pastors ;

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to extraordinary singular Honour done to them, or to their being placed in too eminent a Station in Vision, is removed ; since, by No. 10, 11, the seven golden Candlesticks are as much in *Christ's right Hand*, as the seven Stars.

27. Enough has been said to shew, in general, the *mystical* Nature of the *Vision*, and the *Notions* exhibited by the principal Sights and Appearances therein. But there are other Matters of Knowledge for our Entertainment. After St. *John* had taken his Account of the Figures, or Images, which make up the *Body* of this *emblematical Piece*, he was commanded to write several *Sections*, by way of Instruction and moral Use ; and these make, what is called, the *Soul* of the Device. These *Writings* are in the *epistolary* Style, being dictated by the Person representing *Jesus Christ*, whilst he was trimming and dressing the symbolical Branches, and are, in Form of *Schedules*, to be annexed to the Branches, for the Instruction of those whose mystic Characters they respectively are.

28. We have, then, the *three Parts* of which the *Scheme* exhibited in Vision consisteth, *viz.* the *Symbols*, the *Notions* they express, and the *Writings* (or *Epistles*) belonging to them ; which

Pastors ; but had their public Affairs managed by their Prophets and spiritual Persons from among themselves ; for this, see Dr. *Whitby's general Preface to the Epistles*, p. 34. And, when they had fixed Officers, there appear to have been several *Bishops*, as well as *Deacons*, in one particular Church, see *Phil. i. 1.*

are

are otherwise termed, to St. John, *the Things which thou hast seen, and the Things which are, and the Things which shall be after them*, v. 19. These all go together, and make up one intire Scheme of prophetic Revelation.

29. In examining the *epistolary Part*, it is, therefore, necessary that we bear in our Eye, and Mind, the *two* former, *i. e. the Things that are seen, and the Things that are expressed*; placing all in their proper Order, annexing each *Schedule* to the *Star*, or *Angel*, after whom it is written. For it is evident, that, the *Scene is kept open* *, and each Church is here addressed to, by *Christ*, under some Character, or Imagery, appropriate to his *mystic Form*; and the Churches are described, and have Motives given to them, in *Allusions* and *Metaphors* taken chiefly from the Scenery.

30. Wherefore, the better to *initiate* ourselves in, and comprehend, *the Mystery* before us, where every Thing, or Appearance, is *significant*, and bears some Connection with, or is illustrated by, the *instructive Epistles*, Unity of Time, Place, and Action must be regarded, with every Circumstance we can collect. And, besides what has been noted already, of the particular Work and Business which the *Sacerdotal*

* The inaccurate and unhappy Division of the *Book of the Revelation* into *Chapters*, that here follows, in a good Measure obstructs our View of this Vision, and spoils that Connection of the Parts, *what God hath joined*, that ought not to be put asunder.

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Form was about, to wit, *trimming the Lamps* *, it is highly probable, that, of the *seven Lamps*, which burnt all Night, only *three* were renewed in the Morning : See *Patrick* on *Exod.* xxvii. 20. “ The Priests were obliged, saith *Josephus*, *Antiq. Book* iii. *Chap.* 8, twice a Day “ (*i. e.* before the Sun rose, and before it set) “ to renew the Lamps with purified Oil ; *three* “ of which, in Reverence to omnipotent Power, were kept shining upon the sacred Candlestick all the Day, and the rest were lighted “ on the Evening.” The *three*, thus distinguished, are supposed to be *that* at the *Top*, and the *two middle Branches* on the Sides of the Shaft. See the *Cut* prefixed, §. 1, 4, 5. This Supposition is supported by the Authority of the learned *Rabbins*, and others, who have curiously examined into these Matters of *Jewish Antiquity*.

31. As *the seven Candlesticks* are *the seven Churches*, *i. e.* symbolically, each Church has it's own peculiar Symbol. We shall find the *Ephesian Church* hath one peculiarly appropriated to it [THY CANDLESTICK] and therefore, if there be any *Analogy* and *Decorum* observed, the other *six Churches* must have their respective *Candlesticks* also. Now, as we cannot possibly *adjust the Parts of the Vision*, without knowing

* The Service of the *Jewish High-Priest*, in *dressing the seven Lamps of the golden Candlestick*, I apprehend to be the true *Ground Plot* upon which this *dramatical instructive Vision* is formed.

which Symbol belongeth to this, and which to that, Church; nor, indeed, discover the Beauty and Propriety of some of the *Metaphors*, and *Allusions*, in the *Schedules* that are written *after*, and appertain unto, the *Symbols*—the Speculation is necessary, and will not be altogether dry and useles to those who will *read and bear the Words of this Prophecy*.

32. We will then regard the *Candlestick*, as seen by St. *John*, in its *several Parts* or *Branches*, in the Order we suppose an *Artist* would observe, beginning at the Top, and proceeding from Right to Left; which, being the Manner of reading the *Hebrew* Characters, may be a probable Way to peruse these *mystic* ones with Truth and Exactness. At the same Time we will consider the several *Epistolary Sections*, in the Order in which they are written; which we find agreeable to the *Geographical* Order of the Places whence the Churches are denominated, as appears by a *Map* of the Country; inso-much that, if a Messenger were dispatched from St. *John*, at *Patmos*, to those Churches, he would naturally travel first to *Ephesus*, as being the nearest, then to *Smyrna*, and so on to *Laodicea*, without going out of his Way. But, in examining these *Epistolary Sections*, it must be remembered, we have to do with *Pieces* of great *Antiquity*, to whose mystical Nature or Relation, *Time*, *different Customs*, *various Glosses*, &c. have added greater Obscurity: and, therefore, we must be satisfied with forming *probable Conjectures* of their several Contents.

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33. The *first Candlestick*, among the *symbolical Branches*, belongs to the Church at *Ephesus*; which City was the Metropolis of the *Proconsular Asia*. This Candlestick (see the *Cut*, §. 1.) is in the *Midst* of the *Sconce*, or at the *Top* of the *Shaft*, which the High-Priest, in *Vision*, has *Hold* of, with his Hand. For, tho' he quitted his Charge for a Moment, to recover the Apostle from his *ecstatic* Fright, see *No. 16*, he had now resumed it, and begins his Work with the *first* Lamp, in dressing which, he pronounced the following Documents, for the Use of the Church represented under that *Angelical Star*, which *St. John* was bid to *write*: And which *Writing* is as follows:

Unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus.

“ **T** H E S E Things saith he that HOLD-
 “ **E** T H the seven Stars in his right
 “ Hand, who walketh in the MIDST of the seven
 “ golden Candlesticks.” — Here is recorded, to the Honour of this Church, their Labour and Patience; (which is *twice* mentioned, probably to shew the Notoriety, or a grateful Remembrance, thereof;) their Resentment of Evil-doers, and their Vigilance in detecting the Fraud and Imposture of some *artful* Men, who attempted to set up among them for Apostles and Leaders (of whom they had been forewarned by *St. Paul*, *Acts* xx. 29, 30.) This it seems they did from a *right* Principle, and *persevered* therein:

“ I

“ I know thy Works, and thy Labour, and thy
 “ Patience, and how thou canst not bear them
 “ which are evil : And thou hast tried them
 “ which say, they are Apostles, and are not ; and
 “ hast found them Lyars : And hast borne,
 “ and hast Patience, and for my NAME’s
 “ SAKE hast laboured, and hast NOT FAINT-
 “ ED.” However, it is a Question, whether
 the Love, which this Church once eminently
 bore, unto all the Saints, Ephes. * i. 15, kept
 Pace with their Zeal for Purity. In the Warmth
 of Passion, against Corruptions in Doctrine and
 Worship, it looks as if they had lost their Cha-
 rity : “ Nevertheless I have somewhat against
 “ thee, because thou hast left thy first Love.”—
 The Duty, prescribed them, is, Consideration
 and Amendment, backed with a Threatening,
 to esteem them no longer as the first and best
 Church in Asia, or to that Effect : “ Remem-
 “ ber therefore from whence thou art fallen, and
 “ repent, and do the first Works ; or else I will

* It is supposed, by Persons of good Skill in Critique,
 that what is commonly called the *Epistle to the Ephesians*,
 was, most probably, the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, men-
 tioned Col. iv. 16. See Dr. Benson’s *History*, Vol. ii. Chap.
 10. Sect. 7. If so, this Text is of no Authority in this
 Place. But still, it deserves to be considered, whether the
 Remission of Love, in this Church, can be justly thought
 to be any other, than an Abatement of their former Bene-
 volence and Charity towards Christians of other Commu-
 nities : For, for the Sake of our Lord Jesus, and in Re-
 spect to him, they eminently endured Afflictions, and ex-
 erted themselves hitherto without any Coolness and Indif-
 ferency, he himself bearing them this Testimony : *And
 for my Name’s sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*

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“ come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy
 “ Candlestick OUT OF HIS PLACE, except thou
 “ repent.” —To qualify the severe Rebuke above given, it is acknowledged, that, all their
 Resentment was not misplaced: “ *But this thou*
 “ *hast, that thou hatest the Deeds of the Nico-*
 “ *laitans* *, *which I also hate.*” *A Parable*
 or

* If this was not a *Nickname* for some *Epicureans*, from their saying *Nicolah*, i. e. *Let us eat, or we shall eat*, according to the Conjecture of the learned Dr. *Lightfoot*; (*Vid.* his Works, Vol. ii. p. 662, 756.) but an heretical Sect is hereby denoted: all Antiquity will agree to place *Nicolas* the Deacon at the Head of it, however it may differ about the particular Share of Guilt he had therein. “ He had a Wife who was very handsome; and, in Imitation of those that aimed at a great Degree of Perfection, he left her to live in a State of Continence. *Epiphanius* says that he did not persevere in this Resolution, but took his Wife again, and, in order to justify his Conduct, he advanced Principles that were contrary to Truth and Purity. He plunged himself into Irregularities, and gave Beginning to the Sect of the *Nicolaites*, to that of the *Gnosticks*, and to several others, who, following the Bent of their Passions, invented a thousand different Sorts of Crimes and Wickednesses.—But *Clement of Alexandria*, more ancient than *Epiphanius*, expresses much Esteem for *Nicolas*, and relates the Affair quite otherwise. The Apostles, says he, having made some Reproaches to *Nicolas*, as being too jealous of his Wife, he caused her to come before them all, and declared that any one might espouse her that pleased. This Declaration, which he made in pure Simplicity, and without due Reflection, was only designed as a Proof of the little Attachment and Passion he had for his Wife; and in Reality I have been informed he never cohabited with any other Woman. And as for his Son and his Daughters, who lived very long, they always remained in perfect Virginity. But such, as were glad
 “ to

or *Similitude*, of an important Nature and Design, was seldom drawn by *Jesus*, in his Discourses,

“ to use the Pretence of his Authority, vindicated themselves by what he had done, in order to abandon themselves to all Sorts of Irregularity. These Hereticks grounded themselves, as the same *Clement* reports, upon a Word that *Nicolas* let fall, that the Flesh ought to be abused. By which he meant nothing else but that we ought to suppress our Inclinations to Sensuality and Concupiscence, and to mortify the Passions and the Impetuosities of the Flesh;—whereas these Disciples of Pleasure explained these Words according to their Sensuality, and not according to the Meaning of this apostolical Man.” *Calmet*, Art. N I C. From the most favourable Part of these two Accounts, are not the following Circumstances plain (1.) That *Nicolas* put away his Wife to live single. “ In Imitation of those that aimed at a great Degree of Perfection, he left her to live in a State of Continence”. St. *Clement*, who mentions the inadvertent Declaration he made concerning his Wife, that “ any one might espouse her that pleased,” does not say with *Epiphanius*, he ever took her again, but, “ as he was informed, he never cohabited with any other Woman.” (2.) That he justified this Action, saying, “ that the Flesh ought to be abused.” This, *Clement* says, was one of his *Apophthegms* or pithy Speeches, whereby he taught Continence, and an Abstaining from Pleasures. (3.) That his Example was followed by his Children and others: “ As for his Son and his Daughters, saith *Clement*, who lived very long, they always remained in perfect Virginity. But such, as were glad to use the Pretence of his Authority, vindicated themselves by what he had done, in order to abandon themselves to all Sorts of Irregularity.” From these Circumstances and the Appropriation of his Name to a *Set*, is it not natural to conclude, that *Nicolas* was the Patron of Celibacy, the first married Man who set up the Profession of Continence in the Church? If *Nicolas* meant no more by the Word he let fall, whereon those Hereticks grounded themselves,

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courses, without calling the Attention of the *wise* or well-disposed *Auditor* thereto, in a *proverbial Sentence* *, borrowed, perhaps, from the Schools of the ancient Sages, or Prophets, in awakening their Scholars, *Isai.* l. 4, which we shall here, with an Addition expressive of the prophetic Design, find common to every Device : “ **He that bath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.** ” — The remarkable *Situation* of the Lamp, which the High-Priest is, in Vision, trimming and dressing, and which is in the *Midst* and Center of the symbolical Branches, is the Ground of a fine Allusion to what our first Parents lost, by their Apostasy, and which is here pro-

selves, as the same *Clement* reports, that *the Flesh ought to be abused*, than “ that we ought to suppress our Inclinations to Sensuality and Concupiscence, and to mortify the Passions and Impetuosities of the Flesh : ” — Was not this, with the Action of leaving his Wife, a Beginning or Foundation for Monkery to be grafted on in After-times ? To *disregard the Desire of Women*, or the Duty of Marriage, was an express Character of the great Apostasy, which began early to work, *Dan.* xi. 37. *1 Tim.* iv. 3. And, if *Nicolas* preserved himself chaste, it was more than those, who pretended to justify themselves from his Example, did, they being, if the Accounts of the Fathers may be depended on, a most dissolute and impure Sect. On the Whole : Neither the honest Repute, nor miraculous Gifts, nor Wisdom or Knowledge which recommended *Nicolas* to the Office of *Deacon*, *Acts* vi. 3, 4, 5, were sufficient to secure him, in future Life, from acting at least a *foolish Part*. *Monkery*, if that was the *Thing*, even under the Sanction of *Nicolas's Name*, was exceeding hateful to Christ.

* *Matt.* xi. 15. xiii. 9, 43. *Mark* iv. 23. vii. 16. *Luke* viii. 8. xiv. 35.

mised,

mised, by Way of *Motive*, to be given to the *sacred Conqueror* in the *Christian Exercises* :

“ *To him that OVERCOMETH* * *will I give to*

“ *eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Midst*

“ *of the Paradise of God,*” Ch. ii. 1.—8.

34. The *second Candlestick* (see the *Cut*, § 2.) which is the highest Branch on the right Side of the golden Shaft, belongs to the Church in

* The *Olympic Games*, whose Glory was at this Time spread all over the World, *Nero*, the *Roman Emperor*, himself being a *Competitor* in them, and which were celebrated in the Mother Country of the *Asiatic Greeks*, seem to have afforded the divine Author of this Prophecy some very apt and beautiful Similes ; for, from the Conquerors in those Games, is, I apprehend, this Character taken, *Him that overcometh*, which we meet with in the Epiphonema or Conclusion of every of these Epistles ; and also the more excellent Rewards, which are here proposed to such an one, are, I apprehend, taken either from Metaphors easy and familiar to the Customs in those Games, the particular Circumstances of the Churches, or to the Scene in Vision.— Having seen the learned and ingenious *Dissertation on the Olympic Games*, just published, I will enlarge this Note by the following Quotation, which cannot fail to heighten the Probability of the above Sentiment, as well as please my Reader, and prepare him for some other Thoughts : “ These were the
“ *Gymnastic and Equestrian Games* ; to the *Conquerors*
“ in which the *Olympic Olive*, being offered as an honorary Reward, soon kindled among the several States
“ of *Greece* such an Emulation and Ardour to excel
“ in all the various Exercises, of which they consisted,
“ that there was scarce a Town of any Note, either in
“ *Greece* itself, or in the Colonies of *Greek* Extraction,
“ settled along the Coasts of *Asia* and *Africa*, in the *Ionian* and *Ægean* Islands,—in which there was not a
“ *Gymnasium*, or School of Exercise.” *Dissert.* p. 154.

Smyrna ;

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Smyrna; the Light whereof is the *Star*, or *Angel*, to whom the *second Section* is inscribed.

Unto the Angel of the Church in Smyrna.

The *sacerdotal Form*, in *Vision*, in his Concern with this *Lamp* (which was, perhaps, presently to *extinguish* it till the Return of the Evening, see No. 30.) and in dictating *the Things* pertaining thereto, takes his Character from the Account before given of himself to St. *John*, see No. 17.

“ **T** H E S E *Things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and is alive:*”—Terms, descriptive of the Character peculiar to *Jesus Christ*, the one everlasting High-Priest of the *Christian Church*, and expressive of his great Eminence, and Change of State, from Suffering to Glory; and are well suited to recommend himself to the moral Genius, Condition, and Circumstances of this particular Church. For, the *Christians*, at *Smyrna*, are recorded to be eminent in all the Virtues of the divine Life: “ *I know thy Works, and Tribulation, and Poverty; [but thou art rich.]*” Is it not probable, by what follows, that they had been reproached, and maliciously treated by the *Jews*, the pretended People of God, who dwelt at *Smyrna*? “ *And I know the Blasphemy of them, who say, they*
“ *are*

“ are Jews, and are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan.” Taking these *Adversaries* for *Jews*, literally (which we may do consistently with the Language of Prophecy, because of their *Rejection*, as well as with the then State of Things *) is not the following a *Prophecy*, of some greater Sufferings, of this Church, from, or by Means of them, but covertly expressed, under the Name or Notion of the *Devil*, the Patron, and symbolical Head, of *Persecutors*?— As also of the Space of Time, that would determine the Violence of their Rage? “ Fear none of those Things which thou shalt suffer : Behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have Tribulation † ten Days.”

* In the circular Epistle of the Church of Smyrna, concerning the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp (which happened about Anno 147) they take particular Notice of the *Jews* joining the *Heathen* in the Cry against him ; and that, as an usual Thing with them, they lent their Aid in collecting Materials for the Fire : “ The *Jews* especially, according to their Custom, with all Readiness assisting them in it.” Vid. Bishop Wake’s *Genuine Epistles*, p. 244.

† “ Commentators are much divided as to the Import of these *ten Days*, some understanding thereby to be denoted only a short Space, others a long Space, according as the Hypothesis requires, which they go by. For my own Part, I think it evident, that, if this Epistle be considered as relating literally to the State of the Church of Smyrna, then this Expression of *ten Days* is to be taken in a literal Sense, or so as to denote a short Time. But, if this Epistle be considered

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“*Days.*” As this is spoken of, and to a Church, may not *ten* of *its* own special *Days* be intended? Those I take to be *conventional*, or, as the *Jewish Ecclesiastical Days* were called, *Days of holy Convocation* for *solemn Assemblies*. If this be granted, a *Day*, here, may signify the Church’s *Weekly Festivity*, and answer to that, *the Lord’s Day*, whereon this prophetic Vision was given; *ten* of which will include the Space of so many *Weeks*:—“*Be thou*

“typically and so prophetically, then the said Expression
 “of *ten Days* is to be taken in a prophetic Sense, or
 “so as to denote *ten Years*, or a long Time.” Dr. Wells’s Annot. (n) in Loc. Now, if we can discover, with any Degree of Probability, that the three first Chapters in this Book partake at the same Time of an *historical* and *prophetical Nature* both; May we not form some other Conjecture, different from either of the foregoing, of the *Import* of the *ten Days*? For, if the Persecutions of the Christians, in those early Times, were chiefly *local* (vid. Wake’s Prelim. Dis. Genu. Epist. p. 70.) and not of long Continuance; but “some sudden Fit of Anger in the Persecutors, often occasioned by the Clamour of the Heathen at the Time of their public Shews; the *Jews* being their principal Accusers;” as says Mr. Daubuz; the Series of *ten Years* cannot be admitted. And if it may be thought hardly consistent with the Dignity of Prophecy specially to foretel so short a Space of Affliction, as *ten natural Days*, to those whose Profession put them in constant Expectation thereof, it may be submitted to the Consideration of sagacious Persons, *Whether a Storm of Pagan Fury and Rage, that should follow the Christians at Smyrna, and incapacitate them to hold their religious Assemblies for ten Lord’s Days successively*; may not well suit the Temper of those Times, and well comport with, and be worthy the Notice of, Revelation.

“*faith-*

“ faithful unto Death*, and I will give thee
“ a Crown † of Life.” Then follows the
Sentence of Call to Attention, a Promise to
the sacred Victor, containing the Summary of
what Christ gave in Charge to his Disciples,
Matt. x. 28. couched in Terms borrowed,
perhaps, from the present Action of the High-
Priest, in Vision, in putting out their Lamp,
and finely adapted to excuse that, and the
Ignominy of their Sufferings. “ He that
“ hath an Ear, let him hear what the
“ Spirit saith unto the Churches, He
“ that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second
“ Death,” v. 8—12.

35. The third Candlestick, which is the up-
permost on the left Side of the Shaft (see the
Cut, §. 3.) belongs to the Church of Perga-
mos; the Light whereof is the Star, or An-

* The Laws of Sparta (says the learned and ingenious
Author before quoted) “ commanded a Man to die or
“ conquer.” *Dissertation on the Olympic Games*, p. 73.

† The Olympic Crown was a Chaplet composed of
the Branches of a wild Olive. “ To enhance the Value
“ of these Olive Chaplets, and render them in some De-
“ gree worthy of those Games, which by Way of Emi-
“ nence were stiled Holy, the Eleans pretended that the
“ Tree, from whence they were always, was originally
“ brought to Olympia, by Hercules, from the Country
“ of the Hyperboreans.” *Ibid.* p. 129. “ To excite
“ the Emulation of the Competitors, by placing in their
“ View the Object of their Ambition, these Crowns were
“ laid upon a Tripod, or Table, which, during the Games,
“ was brought out and placed in the Middle of the Sta-
“ dium, or of the Hippodrome, according as the respective
“ Exercises required.” *Ibid.* p. 131.

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gel, to whom the *third Section* is inscribed. Here let us observe one Circumstance, *to wit*, If the Candlestick was the Height of a Man (and less we cannot well suppose it to be) as the glorious and Priest-like Form stood in the Midst, holding the Shaft *in his Right-hand*, when St. *John* first beheld the *Vision*, this Branch must be fronting his Face, and pretty near in a direct Line with the *Sword* from his Mouth. This Circumstance, we shall find, is observed, and alluded to, among the following Things,

Unto the Angel of the Church in Pergamos.

“ **T** H E S E Things saith he which hath
“ the sharp SWORD with two Edges.”
This Church, which had given recent Proofs of its Fidelity, and produced a Martyr, *viz. Antipas*, was remarkably situated among wicked and potent *Adversaries* of the *Christian Religion*, who dwelt at *Pergamos*, a City of *Troas*, very considerable in the Apostles Days *; which *Adversaries* are connoted by their symbolical Head and Patron, SATAN, who, in

* It was at *Pergamos*, as they say, that Parchment was invented, called thence *Pergamena*, *Calmet*; and was remarkable at this Time for, either the *Jews* having some considerable Interest in the Government of the City; or, according to the Rev. Mr. *Pyle*, its being greatly addicted to *Idolatry*,

a Vision of Zechariah's, Chap. iii. 1, stood for the Adversaries of the Servants of God, to resist the Exercise of the Religion and Law of Moses. "I know thy Works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's Seat is: And thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my Faith, even in those Days wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."— Though what is recorded of them, in general, is to their Praise; it seems, some particular Members of this Society were tainted with those loose and impure Tenets with which the Church, in its early Age, was infected; namely, that to feast with the Heathen, on their Idol-Sacrifices, and to commit Fornication, were lawful: These were two of the Things, expressly prohibited by the Council at Jerusalem, Acts xv, and are here stigmatized by the Doctrine of Balaam: And the other, which is called the Doctrine of the Nicolaitans, may be supposed to be this *, viz. that

* It is very difficult, if not impossible, to say precisely what the Doctrine of the Nicolaites was, that is here censured.— Undoubtedly it was different from that of Balaam, before-mentioned; though a proper Distinction, I think, has not been always preserved. As for the ancient Fathers, who had a Relish for Monkeny, and Castigations of the Body, it is not to be wondered if they favoured Nicolas, and ascribed other Principles and Practices, more properly culpable in their Sight, to the Sect that went by his Name, than what they really held. And as for the Church of Rome, it is true, they never had the

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that the Faithful are not bound to regard the Institution of Marriage, and that the Flesh ought to be abused by them. Principles, highly pernicious to the Truth and Purity of the Religion of Jesus Christ: “ But I have a few
 “ Things against thee, because thou hast there
 “ them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam, who
 “ taught Balac to cast a Stumbling-Block before
 “ the Children of Israel, to eat Things sacrificed to Idols, and to commit Fornication. So
 “ hast thou also them that hold the Doctrine
 “ of the Nicolaitans, which Thing I hate.” This Church, in general, being in Reputation, Interest, and Duty concerned, is, therefore, called to a speedy Reformation touching these licentious Doctrines, or the Indulgence they had shewn to those who held them; which is enforced, by representing the imminent Dan-

the Impudence to place *Nicolas* in the *Calendar of Saints* (a great Circumstance against him, as Father *Calmet* himself confesses;) but they have, as far as they could, quite reversed what was judged to be his Crime; having, by the Council of *Placentia*, Anno 1095, condemned certain *Priests*, *Deacons*, and *Sub-deacons*, by the Name of *Nicolaites*, who maintained that Marriage was lawful for them; see *Calmet*, *Dict. NIC.* How then shall we frame our Conjectures? If *Nicolas's* Folly and Inadvertency gave Rise to this *Seet*, and really was what we noted above, No. 33. we may reasonably suppose, that they made some Improvement, and urged his Example so far as to maintain, that the Faithful are not bound to regard the Institution of Marriage, and that the Flesh ought to be abused by them: I say, I think we may reasonably suppose the Doctrine of the *Nicolaites*, here censured, to amount to as much at least as this.

ger,

ger, they were exposed unto, from the Displeasure of *Jesus Christ*, the Lord and Head of the Church, in Figures taken from the most awful Part of the Scenery:— “ *Repent,*
“ *or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will*
“ *fight against them with the SWORD OF MY*
“ *MOUTH.*” The *Motives*, which the Sentence of Moment introduces, are two-fold, being calculated as it were to qualify and balance the Severity of the Threatening; the *first* being taken from what was contiguous to the Scene, the *Manna* that was laid up in a golden Pot, in the most secret Part of the Tabernacle, to be kept for the Generations of *Israel*, *Exod.* xvi. 33, “ as a sure Memorial and Pledge
“ of God’s Favour, Blessing, and Protection to
“ that People.” *Vid.* the Rev. Mr. Pyle in *Loc.* “ **He that hath an Ear, let him**
“ **hear what the Spirit saith unto the**
“ **Churches, To him that overcometh will**
“ **I give to eat of the hidden Manna:**”— And the *second* being an Allusion to the Manner of conferring Reward in the *Olympicks*, which was, by giving, to the *Approved* and *Conqueror*, a *white Stone*, with his Name, and the Value of his Prize, written on it, *vid.* *Hammond in Loc.* The *Christian Victor* being here promised, by the Lord and Judge of the Exercises, a Dignity surpassing all common Rewards and Conceptions: “ *And I will give*
“ *him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new*
“ *Name written, which no Man knoweth save-*
“ *ing he that receiveth it,*” v. 12.—18.

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36. The *fourth Candlestick*, according to the Order in which we have taken them, is, the *middle Branch* of the three on the right Side of the Shaft. See the *Cut*, §. 4. This appertains to the Church in *Thyatira*; the Lamp whereof forms the *Star*, or *Angel*, to whom the *fourth Section* belongeth.

Unto the Angel of the Church in Thyatira.

“ **T**H E S E Things saith the Son of
“ God:”—This was the scenical Appearance of the *glorious Form in Vision*, who was the *Image*, or *Likeness*, of that *Representation* which *Daniel* saw, of the *Ancient of Days*, and, therefore, called *his Son*, see No. 8.—“ *Who hath*
“ *his Eyes like unto a Flame of Fire, and his Feet*
“ *are like fine Brass:*”—Emblems of great Knowledge and Purity. The Propriety of his assuming these Descriptions, in *dressing the Lamp*, and dictating *the Things* belonging to this Church, will appear, by what is enigmatically expressed concerning some Points of a delicate Nature wherein they were blameable. But, first, the Progress which this Church had made, in the *Christian Life*, is recorded to their Honour:
“ *I know thy Works, and Charity, and Service,*
“ *and Faith, and thy Patience, and thy Works,*
“ *and the last to be more than the first.*”—The Point, wherein they are blameable; seems to be a Neglect of Discipline. Some *Seducer* was permitted

permitted to propagate false and impure Tenets, in Favour of *Fornication* and *Idolatry*. If the Women, at *Thyatira*, held Assemblies sometimes for *religious Worship*, apart from the Men, as, it is probable, they did at *Corinth*, and other Cities of *Greece*, see the Revd. Mr. *Taylor on Romans*, Notes, Chap. xvi. v. 1, might not the Person, here pointed out, and intended, be a *Deaconess*, called *Jezabel*, by way of Infamy, as well as to denote her Rank and Influence among her Sex? For some Persons of Quality were among the first Disciples in *Asia*, *Acts* xix, 30, 31. And some Woman, probably a *Deaconess*, had behaved herself very ill, and quite out of Character, if not more than one, as we learn from St. Paul, *1 Tim.* v. 15. *For some are already turned aside after Satan*. Such separate Assemblies for Devotion under the Management of a wanton Wife, or Widow, might be perverted to an Occasion of much Evil. This St. Paul was well aware of,—and, therefore, directed *Timothy* (whom he had besought to abide at *Ephesus*, one of these *Asiatic* Churches, to settle their Affairs) not to admit a Widow, for the future, into the Ecclesiastical Ministry *, or Number of *Deaconesses*, *under threescore Years old*, *1 Tim.* v. 9, -16. The *Mysteries* of *Ceres*, among the *Pagans*, and other *Idolatrous Festivals*, which the Women celebrated, afforded great Opportunity, and

* See Dr. *Whitby*, *1 Tim.* v. Note (e).

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Incentives to Lewdness. If the Prophetess taught, that *it was lawful for Christian Women to join, with their Sex, in those religious, but obscene, Rites of their Country*,—that sufficiently evinced a lascivious Inclination ; and shewed, what *the Depths* were, (indeed properly *Satanical!*) which she possibly might pretend to a Discovery of, in the Doctrine of Liberty. If these were the true Circumstances of Things at *Thyatira*, this Part of the Epistle is plain enough to be understood : The Church was highly to blame, in permitting this Woman, who, probably lay under some *apostolical Censure*, to associate herself with, and to teach and seduce, some of their Members * : “ *Notwithstanding, I have a few Things*

* “ In the Church, or public Assembly, Women were not allowed to speak or prophesy, there, by the Commandment of the Lord, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 34, 37, or so much as to ask any Question in the public Assembly, about what was taught, but are directed to consult their Husbands at Home : Much less were they allowed to *teach* the Men— But in their separate Meetings, which consisted of none but Women, they are supposed, and allowed, to pray and prophesy,” *Vid. Taylor on Romans.* Therefore the Persons here termed, *my Servants*, whom this pretended Prophetess taught, and seduced, were probably be those of her own Sex. But if, as the Word, *Servants*, is in the *Masculine* Gender, the Men are primarily intended, the Church was still more culpable, in suffering *Jezabel* to teach where she had no Authority, as well as to teach what was subversive of good Morals, Virtue and Piety. There are Commentators of good Note, who, from other Copies, instead of *Woman*, read *thy Wife Jezabel* ; so Dr. *Wells*, *Daubuz*, &c. If that Reading be preferred, I confess a great Difficulty.

For,

“ Things against thee, because thou sufferest that
 “ Woman Jezabel, which calleth herself a Pro-
 “ phetess, to teach and to seduce my Servants to
 “ commit Fornication, and to eat Things sacrificed
 “ unto Idols. And I gave her Space to repent
 “ of her Fornication, and she repented not.”—
 The Punishment of her, and her Accomplices,
 is threatened in Terms suitable to a loose incon-
 tinent Behaviour : “ Behold, I will cast her
 “ into a Bed,” of Languishment, instead of a
 Bed of Lewdness, “ and them that commit A-
 “ dultery with her, into great Tribulation, ex-
 “ cept they repent of their Deeds ; and I will
 “ kill her Children with Death.”—Temperance,
 Sobriety, and Chastity in the Female Sex, in the
 Matrimonial State, is encouraged with the Pro-
 mise of Safety in Child-bearing, 1 Tim. ii. 15,
 but adulterous Practices are connected with
 Tribulation and Sorrow, Abortion and Death.
 An equitable Distribution ! and calculated to
 establish the Authority of Christ, the Head of
 the Church, who knoweth the private Trans-

For, if the *Angel of the Church* represents the Church, then
 not a single Person, but the whole Female Assembly are
 characterized by *Jezabel*, which it is hard to suppose were
 all corrupted. But if the *Angel of the Church* was, or re-
 presented, the *Bishop*, the *Bishop's Wife* must be intended,
 as they who follow this Reading do indeed suppose ; but
 then, his Character, before given, for an Increase in Vir-
 tue and good Works, seems to render it highly improbable,
 he should permit his Wife to become a Prostitute to the
 Society, and a Patroness of Idolatry, as she appears, at least,
 not far from being, who is here described.

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actions of every separate Assembly, however secluded they may be from common Observation : “ *And all the Churches shall know, that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts : and I will give unto every one of you ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS.*” What follows, on the Probability of the above Conjecture, seems to be an *Address* to both Men and Women, in *Thyatira*, who neither favoured the Doctrine, nor were initiated in these *Depths of Satan*, to preserve their Purity and Chastity of Body and Mind, to which the Gospel obliged them : “ *But unto you I say † the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this Doctrine, and which have not known the Depths (of Satan) as they speak ; I will put upon you no other Burthen * but*” this ‡, “ *What ye have already, hold fast till I come.*” And, by way of Encouragement, they are promised, to have, and exercise, a much greater Authority, than that they were called to use, in respect to the Women’s As-

† Which Rendering, by Dr. *Wells*, from the *Alex.* and other *MSS.* and *Versions*, leaves but little Ground for the Notion, that the Persons spoken to, in this *Verse*, are of two Sorts or Orders ; much less that it relates to the Church in two Intervals of Time ; as some learned Men have conjectured.

* A Phrase for the *heavy Things*, which the ancient Prophets pronounced, concerning some Cities and Communities : but is applied, by Christ, to his Doctrines and Commands, *Math.* xi. 30, which Christians are to take upon them the Profession and Practice of.

‡ So Dr. *Wells*.

sembly,

sembly, or, over the Prophets, and the corrupt Members of their own Church, even to *judge the World* * : “ *And he that overcometh, and keepeth my Works unto the End, to him will I give Power over the Nations ; (and he shall rule them with a Rod of Iron : As the Vessels of a Potter shall they be broken to Shivers ;) even as I*” (according to the *aforecited Words, from Psal. ii.*) “ *received of my Father.*” It was observed, No. 30, that of the *seven Lamps*, which burnt all Night, on the *sacred Candlestick*, only *three* were renewed in the Morning. One of the three is supposed to belong to the *Branch* before us. If this be true, the *Metaphor*, in the following *Motive*, is taken from the present *Action in Vision*, not from Heaven : And the Moral is, the resolute faithful *Combatant*, under the Care and Conduct of *Jesus Christ*, shall for ever shine ; his Light shall never be extinguished ; “ *And I will give him the Morning Star* † : *He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches,*” v. 18-ult.

37. The *fifth Candlestick*, which is the middle Branch of the three on the left Hand, (see the *Cut*, §. 5.) belongs to the Church in *Sardis* ; to whom the *fifth Section* appertains : which is as follows,

* See 1 Cor vi. 2, with Mr. *Locke's* Notes, where is an Argument of St. *Paul's*, touching the *incestuous Person*, not much unlike this.

† *The Star of the Morning.* Vid. Dr. *Hammond.*

*Unto the Angel of the Church in
Sardis.*

“ **T**H E S E Things saith he that bath
 “ the seven Spirits of God and the seven
 “ Stars.”—This *Vision* being one intire emblematical Piece, or kind of painted Enigma, of all whose Parts some sensible Perception may be had ; it may be enquired, *what*, and *where*, are the seven Spirits of God ? and *why* are they seven ? In Answer to which, we may take Notice, that the seven Spirits are here mentioned in Conjunction with the seven Stars. This Hint may assist us to find them out. The Stars are called *Angels*. To the seven *Angels*, are inscribed seven Epistles, termed the *Things which shall be after them*, see the Note No. 20. and which are, as *Schedules*, to be annexed to the Hieroglyphical Branches. These *epistolary Schedules* contain the Soul of the whole Device, or Spirit of the Design. Before the Opening of the Vision, the seven Spirits are said to be, *before the Throne*, Chap. i. 4, from whence St. John wished *Grace and Peace* to these Churches ; *i. e.* he most affectionately desired, that what God was about to say, unto them, by this Scheme of prophetic Revelation, might issue in their Favour and Happiness. After the first View and Opening of the Vision, before the mystic Form began his *Action*, of dressing the Lamps, and before St. John began to write,
 the

the mystic Signs, and the Notions they express, were all that were seen and knowable of the Vision. The *epistolary Schedules* were not, as yet, indited : they were *the Things which shall be hereafter*, Chap. i. 19. Now, these being about to be introduced, the *seven Spirits* are said to be *with the Form* in Vision : *He hath the seven Spirits of God* ; and was now about to disclose the Sentiments of God, in what regarded the *seven Churches*, by dictating a like Number of Epistles, unto them ; in each of which, what is written, is said to be, *what the Spirit saith unto the Churches* : to which Remark due Attention is required, “ *He that hath an Ear, let him hear.*” The Schedules, being once finished, seem to be the Characters or mystic Signs whereby *the seven Spirits* are exhibited *. —And the Reason why they are *seven*, is here to be assigned from the *Candlestick*, and the necessary Adjustment of Things thereto, rather than from the *Number* itself †. The Spirit
of

* As the Word, *Spirit*, is of great Latitude, and has many Acceptions in Scripture, the Meaning of it in this difficult Place may, perhaps, be illustrated, by St. John's Use of it, 1 *Epistle*, iv. 1. *Beloved, believe not every Spirit, but try the Spirits whether they are of God : Because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.* Where, I think, it is evident, *Spirits* signify Doctrines or Schemes of Instruction.

† There is nothing can disserve Revelation more, than to make *Mysteries* where there are none, and to multiply them where they are. From the *Rest* of God, from Creation, on the *seventh* Day, the Number *Seven* was as it were consecrated, and derived thence a kind of sacred Character ;

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of Prophecy, strictly speaking, is but *one* ; like the *golden Candlestick*, which was but *one Piece of Furniture*, tho' it consisted of *seven Parts* or *Branches* : But, as the *Branches* stand for *seven*

Character ; so that, whenever it was expedient, in the *Jewish* Religion and Polity, to use some Number, that had generally the Preference. Thus the *Blood* of the Sacrifices for Atonement before the Lord, and *Oil* and *Water* in other cleansing Rites, were to be sprinkled *seven Times*. The Land was to rest every *seventh Year*. *Seven Times seven Years* was the Year of *Jubilee*. *Seven Priests* bore before the Ark *seven Trumpets* : &c. Hence it is easy to see, how this Number came to have a *Plenitude* ascribed to it, and to be used to express what was compleat and perfect, as the *seven Eyes* are the *Eyes of the Lord*, *Zach. iii. 9. iv. 10.* Agreeable to this, from the Prediction of the Spirit of God to rest upon *Messiah*, *Isai. xi. 2,* (where the *Septuagint* reckon up *seven Gifts of the Spirit*, vid. *Lowth in Loc.*) the *Jews* (says Dr. *Lightfoot*) *speak much of the seven Spirits of Messiah.*

The Deference and Regard paid to this Number, in the Old Testament-Prophecy, is fitly retained in the New ; this Book of the Apocalypse being observed to run, as it were, on *Sevens*, to wit, *seven Seals, seven Trumpets, seven Vials* ; and here, *seven golden Candlesticks, seven Stars, seven Spirits.*

The *seven Lamp-Sconce* being to be the Type and Imagery in this dramatical Scene, *seven Churches of Asia* are selected, to be represented thereby, whose Circumstances best suited the general Design ; to whom *seven Sections of Prophecy*, given from God, for their Instruction and Use, are, analogically and with due Proportion and Relation to the Scheme, *the seven Spirits of God.*

I make this Note, in order to shew, that, whatever *Balaam* thought of some *magic Quality* or Power therein, who seems to have used it in his *Divination* against *Israel*, *Numb. xxiii. 1, 14, 29.* the Use of this Number may be accounted for in this Vision, without ascribing more of a *mystic Quality* to it, than other Numbers are capable of.

Churches,

Churches, and with Propriety could be Images of no more ; *the Spirit* having somewhat to say, to each in particular, either for their *Reproof, or Correction, or Instruction in Righteousness*, — this is written, in so many *Sections* as there are Churches *represented*; which maketh, by a Transfer of the Name of the Cause to its Effects, the Spirits an exact correspondent Number. *The seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars*, being *with Christ*, discover, how compleatly qualified he is to be the great Prophet of God to his Servants. *He hath the seven Spirits of God; and the seven Stars*, or angelical Images of the Churches, are with him also. He perfectly knows the Mind of God, with respect to them, as well as inspects their particular Tempers and Dispositions towards God; and, consequently, may well demand their most serious Attention. “ *These Things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars; I know thy Works, that thou hast a Name that thou livest, and art dead.*” — Alluding to the Symbol of this Church, which being the Branch issuing from the same Knop in the Shaft on the Left, as that of THYATIRA on the Right (see the Cut, §. 4, 5) is one of those whose Lamps were *perpetually* burning in the Holy Place. Thus, this Character belonged to the *Sardian Church* in the hieroglyphic, as well as in the moral, or religious Sense, *Thou hast a Name that thou livest*. But their true internal Constitution gave both their *Profession*, and *Symbol*, the Lye ; *thou art dead*. A Description, short

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and poignant. Their virtuous Dispositions were few and languid. That Righteousness, which is their Light, appeared to be so faint and dim as to be scarce discernible; bearing no Proportion to what their Lamp, and what their Profession, was, *before God*; in respect to which, there was a vast Disparity, a notorious Imperfection. For, they, by their Calling, were obliged to be *watchful* *; but were now on the Point of forgetting themselves, going out, or dropping into a State of Insensibility: “ *Be watchful, and strengthen the Things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy Works perfect before God.*” This is the Ground of the following short, but pathetic, Exhortation, to an intire Change of their Disposition and Conduct; which is urged from a *Threatening*, taken from the Consequences of Danger, which a slumbering, inactive State exposed them to. “ *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a Thief †,*” “ *and thou shalt not know what Hour I will come upon thee.*” From this dull, lethargic State of Religion, in *Sardis*, a few particular Members only are excepted, who had not thus stain-

* *Matth. xxiv. 42, 43. xxv. 13.*

† *Christ's, or the Day of the Lord's, Coming as a Thief*, denotes, as well as the *Surprize*, the *Loss* or *Damage* they will sustain, thereby, on whom *he*, or *it*, so cometh: Witness his desolating Judgments on the *Jewish Nation*.

ed and sullied their Profession, but preserved its Splendor, and to whom a suitable Reward is promised: “*Thou hast a few Names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their Garments; and they shall walk with me in White, for they are worthy.*” What follows is a Promise, or Motive to form the genuine Christian, viz. that he should be clad in the Garb, and enrolled among the Number of Priests and sacred Persons; and as the Herald proclaimed the Conqueror’s Name, in the Grecian Games, publicly, he should have honourable Mention made of his Name, before God, in Heaven: “*He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white Raiment; and I will not blot out his Name out of the Book * of Life; but I will confess his Name before my Father, and before his Angels. He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches,*” Chap. iii. 1.—7.

38. The *sixth Candlestick* (see the Cut, §. 6.) is the lowest on the Right-hand, and appertains to the Church in *Philadelphia*: The Light of which is the *Star*, or *Angel*, to whom the *sixth Section* is inscribed.

* I will not say, this is an *Allusion* to the Register of the Olympic Conquerors; but, I may say, such Register was regarded as *their Book of Life*; what perpetuated their Memory, their Names and Exploits being written therein: And such an one has the *slain Lamb*, of all his Followers, from the Foundation of the World, Chap. xiii. 8.

*Unto the Angel of the Church in
Philadelphia.*

“ **T** H E S E Things saith he that is holy,
 “ he that is true, he that hath the Key
 “ of David; he that openeth, and no Man shut-
 “ teth; and shutteth, and no Man openeth.”—
 These Characters belong to the *Priest-like Form in Vision*, or to the Person of *Jesus Christ*, represented thereby; the two former, denoting his eminent Purity and Faithfulness; and the latter, his Power, which he hath, as Lord and Head of the Church. What was promised to *Eliakim*, the High-Priest, the Son of *Hilkiab*, viz. *the Key of the House of David*, *Isai. xxii. 22.* (which Key was the Ensign of the Office of High-Treasurer in the *Jewish Kingdom*) is, with the Person in Vision, among *the Keys of Hell and of Death*, see *No. 17.* A fit Emblem of the Power, and Jurisdiction, of *Jesus Christ*, both in the Church and World! The Reason of notifying this, thus particularly to this Church, seems to be, that Measure of Liberty and Protection, Countenance and Encouragement, which the *Christians at Philadelphia* then enjoyed, from the civil Magistrate, and which they are directed to observe as a remarkable Instance of God’s governing Providence:— “ *I know thy Works. Behold, I have set before thee an open Door, and no Man can shut it.*”
q. d. I have disposed Matters in such a Man-
 ner

ner for you, as a Person in great Authority doth, for the Enlargement and Happinefs of a Friend; procuring you Liberty, for the Exercise of your holy Religion, maugre all the Attempts of your Enemies. And this favourable Indulgence feems to be granted them, becaufe of their Uprightnefs and Integrity: “*For thou haft a little Strength, and haft kept my Word, and haft not denied my Name.*” The former is, probably, an Allufion to their Lamp; their good Works were conspicuous, and fhone like a *Constellation* *, with fome Degree of Brightnefs; which is farther explained, *thou haft kept my Word*, been faithful to that facred *Depositum* I made amongst you of my Gofpel, the Laws of which thou haft obferved; *and haft not denied my Name*, or acted a timorous, bafe, and unworthy Part in Regard to me, in a Time of great Defection †. It

* *For thou haft a little Host.* So Dr. Wells.

† That great Changes happened, and Corruptions prevailed, in general, among the *Asian* Churches, foon after their firft Planting, may be collected, not only from what St. Paul foretold, to the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, at *Miletus*, *Acts* xx. 29, 30. *For I know this, that after my Departing fhall grievous Wolves enter in among you, not fparing the Flock. Alfo of your own felves fhall Men arife, fpeaking perverfe Things, to draw away Difciples after them:* But, from what he fays to *Timothy*, 2 *Epift.* i. 15. as of a Matter public and notorious, *This thou knoweft, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; or, they have turned me off,* *Whitby* in *Loc.* They had, it feems, rejected him as an *Apoftle*, and were for *Cephas*, or *John*, or for perhaps fome *Judaizing*

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It is probable that the *Jews*, who about this Time were dispersed all over *Asia*, and who were the first and most virulent Enemies to the Primitive *Christians*, had here, as well as at *Smyrna* (see No. 34.) a *Synagogue*; and that they behaved with great Insolence and Pride towards the *Philadelphian Church*, boasting of a better Institution, and superior Privileges, although now in a State of *Rejection*. What follows is, I humbly conceive, a *Prophecy* relating to them, in which the High-Priest, in *Vision*, engages assuredly * to mortify them in a most sensible Manner: “ *Behold, I will*
“ *make them of the Synagogue of Satan* (to wit,
“ *who say they are Jews, and are not, but do*
“ *lye)* *behold, I will make them to come and*
“ *worship before thy Feet, and to know that I*
“ *have loved thee.*” This is followed by another *Prophecy*, concerning an approaching Storm of Persecution, or some great Evil, which was gathering, and ready to break, over the *Jewish World*, or else over the whole *Roman Empire*; during which, this Church is promised a special Protection: “ *Because*

daizing Teachers, in Opposition to him. Which makes it but too evident, that the Church was not that *chaste, unspotted Virgin*, during the Life-time of the Apostles, that some of the Ancients and almost all Moderns talk of.

* A *Repetition*, in *Prophecy*, is *emphatical*, and expressive either of the Notoriety of the Thing; the Degree of Approbation or Disapprobation, in which it is held; or, of the certain Accomplishment of what is predicted concerning it.

“ *thou*

" thou hast kept the Word of my Patience,"
(the Gospel, the Promulgation of which exercised my Patience in the greatest Sufferings)

" I also will keep thee from the Hour of Temptation, which shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth. Behold, I come quickly: Hold that fast which thou hast, that no Man take thy Crown."

The *Motive* to form the *Hero*, according to the divine Plan of the Gospel, is here couched in several Metaphors taken from the Statues and Monuments of Glory, which were usually erected to the Conquerors in the Olympic Games: *" Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the Temple of my God;"* a Support as well as Ornament in the sacred Building; *" and he shall go no more out;"* be subject to no Change or Remove, as ordinarily Statues are, or as the Star, or Light of this Candlestick, did, by Day; *" and,"* for an Inscription to perpetuate his Fame, *" I will write upon him the Name of my God,"* to whose Honour, and in whose Institutions, he entered himself a Combatant, and became *Victor*; *" and the Name of the City of my God,"* of which Society he is free; *" which is new Jerusalem;"* and *" which,"* in Point of its high Original and Descent, *" cometh down out of Heaven from my God; and I will write upon him my new Name*."* **He that hath**
" **all**

* A new Name, seems to be that which belongeth to, or is expressive of, a new State: And an Attribute for a Name,

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“ an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, v. 7.—
“ 14.”

39. The *seventh*, and last, of these symbolical Branches, belongeth to the Church of the *Laodiceans*, and is the lowest on the left Side of the golden Shaft (see the *Cut*, §. 7.) The Light or Lamp on this Branch is the *Angel*, after whom the *seventh Section* is inscribed, which is as follows :

Name, is common to Revelation, see *Exod.* iii. 13, 14. *They shall say unto me, What is his Name? What shall I say unto them? And the Lord said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM.— Thus shalt thou say to the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* In this Book the Name of the God of Christ (the Character, or Impression whereof, this Pillar is to bear) seems that whereby his necessary Existence or Eternity is described, *Chap.* i. 4.— *Him which is, and which was, and which is to come.* Christ's new Name is no Secret, or it could not be a Motive to Fortitude and Victory. Did he not tell it himself, to *St. John*, *Chap.* i. 18? Though, without mentioning it again, explicitly, in the Epistles, to any one particular Church. A Particle of Note he then prefixed: *Behold! I am alive for evermore.* This, I apprehend, is that new Name of his, which Christ will write upon this Pillar. The Instruction is, the Attributes, whereby Christ is known and distinguished, are his People's Security; or, as himself has better expressed it, *John* xiv. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also.*

Unto

*Unto the Angel of the Church of the
Laodiceans.*

“ **T** H E S E Things saith the Amen, the
 “ faithful and true Witness, the Be-
 “ ginning of the Creation of God.”—The Place
 of this Symbol among the Branches, and the
 Order consequent thereon, in which this Church
 is addressed, may be one Reason, why the
 Form in Vision here took upon him this par-
 ticular Title, *These Things saith THE AMEN*.
 The Wisdom and Condescension of *Jesus*
Christ, as a Teacher, partly appeared in his
 adapting himself unto, and putting himself as
 it were on a Level with, his Audience. The
 Church at *Laodicea* was not mean and con-
 temptible, or less significant, because of the
 Order in which they are placed in this dra-
 matic Design. Rather than that shall offend
 and give them Umbrage, the *Angel*, the Re-
 presentative of *Christ's Presence*, attends, and,
 as it were, follows after them, in the *Mystery*,
 as the *Amen*, in a Form of Devotion; the
 concluding *So be it*, of this prophetic Scheme
 of Revelation in particular, and of all the di-
 vine Purposes, Promises and Threatenings to
 the Churches:—I say, this may be one Rea-
 son of *Christ's* being stiled the *Amen*, in the
 last Part of this dramatical Piece. But this is
 not the only Reason; for, as it is a Term of
 Asseveration, or solemn Affirmation, which
Jesus was wont to use in some of his Dis-
 courses,

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courses, [*Verily, Gr. Amen, I say unto you, &c.*] he may assume it for *his* Title, to shew the *Certainty* of those Matters here *revealed* by him. What followeth will explain this: *These Things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness*;— he who may be depended upon, and who will not attest a Falshood; *the Beginning of the Creation of God*, who was in the Beginning with God, and by whom God made all Things, spiritual or mundane, *John* i. 1, 2, 3. and, therefore, what he hath to say, concerning you, deserveth and demandeth your suitable Regard:— “ *I know thy Works, that thou art neither cold nor hot* * : *I would thou*

* As our Lord Jesus Christ, in his Parabolical Discourses, was wont chiefly to allude to *present* Things, and not to run far for Matter for Type and Allegory (see Sir Isaac Newton's *Observations*, Page 148.) it may deserve Consideration, whether the Qualities, of *Cold* and *Heat*, here, are to be applied to Liquids; *Water* being remote from the Scene. Besides, if this is literally, in the Hieroglyphicks, an Address to, under the Notion of an *Angel*, the bright Extremity of the *Lamp*, which the High-Priest in Vision was *trimming* (see No. 27, 29.) may not these Qualities be applicable, and fitly understood of an Allusion, to the *Flame* or *Light*? A very learned Person informs me, the Word, here rendered *hot*, is derived from a Verb, whose Participle occurs, *Acts* xviii. 25. *Rom.* xii. 11. which is translated *severent*. Besides, if the High-Priest, in Vision, was trimming the Lamps, with a sharp two-edged Sword from his Mouth, according to No. 13; might not the *Emission*, threatened, be rather the *Sword* (with which, from out of his Mouth, he would *provoke* and *agitate* this dull and listless Church,) than the Church itself, or its Symbols? With *that*, it is, he

“ *thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou*
 “ *art lukewarm,*” (listless and indifferent, wanting an earnest Passion and Fervour of Spirit)
 “ *I will spew thee out of my Mouth.*” The Reason of this Treatment follows: “ *Because*
 “ *thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with*
 “ *Goods, and have Need of Nothing; and*
 “ *knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*”
 They were, it seems, ready to describe their State in the common Proverb of an *affluent Man*; whereas a Picture of the *greatest Indigency* best expressed their Likeness. All that was ill seems to have belonged to the Case of the Church of the *Laodiceans*, except the Want of a Friend, which they had in the Person of the High-Priest in *Vision*, who was over the *Treasury*, see No. 38. and who, besides the rich *Metals* and *Vestments*, and *Medicinal* and other *Unguents*, in which the Treasures of the Ancients chiefly consisted, which were at his Disposol, bore a real Affection and Concern for their Welfare: “ *I counsel thee to buy*” (i. e. to procure by a proper Application, see Prov. xxiii. 23. *Isai.* lv. 1, 2.) “ *of me Gold*
 “ *tried in the Fire, that thou mayest be rich;*
 “ *and white Raiment, that thou mayest be*

he threatens to fight against the corrupt Members at *Pergamos*, No. 35. And, by what follows, in this *Section*, it seems, their *Correction*, and not *Rejection*, was intended. This I submit to the Judgment of my Superiors.

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“cloathed, and that the Shame of thy Nakedness do not appear; and Salve to anoint thine Eyes, that thou mayest see. As many as I love I rebuke and chasten: Be zealous therefore, and repent.”—In respect to this instructive *Allegory*, and to those who would improve in Wisdom thereby, he familiarly represents himself under a *Parable*, of a *Person knocking at a Door*, giving some sensible Alarm, to gain Admission, in order to feast his Friend: “Behold, I stand at the Door and knock: If any Man hear my Voice, and open the Door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and be with me.” Then follows the *Motive* to finish and perfect the illustrious *Christian Combatant*, drawn from the Pattern of him whom the *Form in Vision* exhibited: “To him that overcometh will I grant to *sit with me in my Throne †, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father in his Throne. He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches.” v. 14—ult.

40. There are two Circumstances, in the *Epistles*, which could not wholly escape the Reader's Notice. The first relates to their

* The Honour of *the first Seat*, at all public Spectacles, was one Reward generally conferred on the Conquerors in the sacred Games. *Vid. Dissert.* p. 150.

† The *Jewish High-Priests*, as well as *Kings*, had their *Thrones*, *Zach.* vi. 13. The *Eastern Thrones* were very large, and in Form of a *Bed* or *Couch*, so that many Persons might sit in them at once. *Waple in Loc.*

Parts, which are *three* : The *Preface*, containing the special Title assumed by the *Sacerdotal Form* :—The *Monitory Part*, containing Commendations or Reprehensions, and Instructions, to each particular Church ;—and an *Epiphonema* or Reflection of general and important Use. If the *Prefatory Part* was spoken when the High-Priest applied himself to, and took the *Lamp*, which he specified, to St. *John*, by the *Angel of such a Church*,—and made his *Commendations*, or *Reproaches*, of that Church, during his *Action of trimming and dressing its Lamp* ; the *Epiphonema* may be supposed to be uttered, as he *replaced*, or put the *Lamp again into its Socket* on the *Branch*. If this Distinction, and Application, of the Parts, be too nice, let it be rejected. The Parts will remain distinct, and the Action different, whether the Application be admitted or not. The other Circumstance is, in the *Epiphonema's*, where an obvious *Transposition* seems to prove, the *Form of the Candlestick*, and the *Manner of annexing the Epistles*, by Way of *Schedula* thereto, to be as we have described. For, if the Branches did, after the common *Model*, meet in a Line at the Top, as it would then perhaps be impossible to distinguish the Symbol of each Church, or know which to call the *first*, the *second*, &c. So if the *Epistles* are taken as they follow each other, independent of the Imagery, and Action, in Vision, and not placed to their proper Branches (to say nothing of the Metaphors and Allusions which then

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then appear strange and remote) that *Transposition* is vastly odd and unaccountable. In the *Epiphonema's* of the *three first*, the Sentence of Call to Attention, *He that bath an Ear, let him hear*, is the *Prologue*, and introduces the Promise of Reward or grand Motive to Victory and Heroism; whereas, in the *four last*, the Promise or grand Motive precedes, and that Sentence maketh the *Epilogue*. Now this, on our Adjustment of Things, seems to be a Decoration, agreeable to a Composure of the *dramatic* Kind. However, it certainly is the Effect of Judgment and Design, and looks fair to be a special Mark of the true Order and Disposition that ought to take Place in this *Scheme* *. If this *Observation* tends to *settle the Parts*, and shew the *Construction* of the *Scheme in Vision*, and to discover *Beauty and Proportion* in what seemed odd, or inaccu-

* This remarkable *Transposition* seems to have confirmed Mr. *Brightman* in his *typical Revelation* of these Churches. I wish Dr. *Hammond*, who justly explodes Mr. *Brightman's* *licentious Fancy*, had taken some Notice of this. Circumstances external, and relative to *Form* and *Embellishment*, are perhaps no farther to be regarded. And in Truth, if every decorous Part in a prophetical Scheme is to *prophecy*—these Kind of Writings afford such Scope for warm Imaginations, that few sober Men would bestow a Thought upon them. It is well if Prophecy itself be not exposed to Contempt, like as the fine Parabolical Discourses of our Lord are exposed, when (e.g. in the *Prodigal Son*, the *Robe*, the *Ring*, the *Shoes*, and even the *Calf*) Particulars of Ornament and Decorum, shall be respectively charged with *Mysteries*.

rate, it will not be thought impertinent or trivial.

41. Tho' the *Scene*, and principal *Imagery* in *Vision*, is taken from the *Jewish* Tabernacle, yet, we have discovered, in the *Epiphonematical* Part of the *Epistles*, some *Similies* and *Allusions* to the *religious Rites* of the *Gentiles*. Thus the *Victor*, in the *Olympic* and other sacred Games, who was *universally honoured*, nay *almost adored**, seems evidently to be alluded to in those Words, which are inserted as the Character of a brave Christian, in every Epistle, HIM THAT OVERCOMETH; as *the white Stone*, mentioned *Chap. ii. 17*, is, probably, an *Allusion* to *that* by which the *Victor's Reward* was assigned to him; see the last *Note* under *No. 33*, and *No. 35*. This *Condescension* of God to speak in the Language of Men, and to use those Figures and Forms of Expression agreeable to the Philosophy and Theology of the Times, shews, not only the divine Intention to be understood; those Phrases being easy and familiar to the *Christians* of that Age and Country †; but also, that it

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* *Potter's Antiq.* Vol. I. Book. II. *Chap. 21.*

† It appears that certain of the *Asiarchæ*, or Presidents of the *sacred Games* in *Asia*, were among the Friends of *St. Paul*, at *Ephesus*, when *Demetrius* raised an Uprore there against him, see *Hammond* and *Whitby* on *Acts xix. 31.* That *St. Paul* had frequent Reference to those Games, is evident by Terms of the *Agonistic* Kind, that occur in almost all his Epistles, *1 Cor. ix. 24.—27. Gal. v. 7. Eph. vi. 12. Phil. iii. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 5. iv.*

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is not an improbable Supposition, that this *prophetic Vision* is conducted in some Manner agreeable to the sacred Solemnities, called *the Mysteries*, observed at *Eleusis* in *Attica*, and revered all over the Neighbourhood of these Churches.—Now (not to take Notice that the Priest, that attended at the *Initiation*, was called *a Revealer of Holy Things* *) I observe, of the Manner of this *Vision*, that it was, like those *Mysteries*, ushered in with *a great Voice*, strange and awful; and exhibited *holy and unusual Sights* †: And also, that, as in them, the Images were Bodies, in which the *Demon* or *Genii* was supposed to reside; being considered, by skilful *Mythologists*, as *animated Statues full of Sense and Spirit* ‡; so here, the Images of the Churches are considered as *animated*, and *informed by their Angels*. Thus much Agreement there is, whatever be the Ground or Reason thereof, whether designed or undesigned.

Such Persons as consider the Condescension of God, in permitting *Ethnic* Rites a Place in the

7, 8. *Heb. xii. 1, 4.* And that those Phrases and Allusions were easy and familiar to the first Christians, is also as evident by *the Epistle of the Churches of Vienna and Lyons*, to those of *Asia* and *Phrygia*, which “is very full of Athletical Terms;” as the learned *Valesius* observes, in his *Notes on Euseb. Book V. Chap. 1.*

* *Potter's Antiq. Vol. I. Book II. Chap. 20.*

† See the reverend and learned Mr. *Jackson's Farther Def. of the Anci. Philosophers*, p. 31, 32.

‡ *Mede's Works*, p. 632.

Jewish

Jewish Ritual *, will be less startled at the Supposition, that this *Revelation*, to his Servants, is made somewhat *similar* to those highly reputed *instructive Mysteries*, into which all the great Men, Philosophers and Legislators, of those Days, were *initiated*.—However, the *Ground-plot*, or grand Scheme in *Vision*, which is principally to be attended to, that, I say, is taken from a *divine Pattern*, if, with additional Circumstances, it should appear to be finished, and accomodated, to the Taste of the then Age.

Having thus taken an Account of the *Vision*, in all its Parts † ; to wit, the principal Sight
and

* “ The *Cherubims*, which were the Symbols of the Presence of the God of *Israel*, were made up of the same Figures with the most adored *Egyptian* Symbols.—The *Cherubims* were also placed in the most secret and holy Part of the Tabernacle and Temple of the *Jews*, as the *Egyptian* Symbols were placed in their *Adyta*, or inner and most hidden Parts of their Temples. The sacred Books likewise of both were laid up in the same *Adyta*. The *Egyptians* also had Lamps kept always burning in the inner Parts of their Temples, as the *Jews* had in their Sanctuary.—Indeed, God in his all-wise Providence ordered the Religion and Worship of his People in many Things similarly to that of the *Egyptians*.” Mr. Jackson’s *Belief of a future State*, p. 105, 107.

† Mr. Jurieu (who was inclined to believe, that there is Nothing of Prophecy in those Chapters that have been the Subject of these Observations) after reviewing the several Explications of the *Mystery of the seven Churches*, by Forbes, Cocceius, and Dr. Henry More, concludes with this Remark, which I leave to my Reader’s Judgment

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and Appearances or *Things seen* ; the Notions they express or *the Things that are* ; and read, and endeavoured to understand, the Contents of the several epistolary Sections or *Things after them* ; we will conclude with *two Observations* touching the Nature, Use, and Importance thereof.

I. This *Vision* has, probably, some Connection and Use in respect to the subsequent *Visions* recorded in the Book of the *Apocalypse*.

That the *Vision* immediately related to, or did primarily and directly concern, the *seven Asiatic Churches*, is evident as well from the *Declaration* of the *great Voice*, with which it was ushered in, as from the *Inscriptions* we meet with on the several *Sections* ; in all which, we find, these Churches are expressly named, particularly described, and addressed to, by the Spirit of Prophecy, and not other Churches.

The Want of a just Notion of the *Scheme* of this *prophetic Vision*, which (as above appears) is intirely of the *dramatic* and *emblematic* Kind ; and mistaking the *Schedules*, which contained *the Form of Words pronounced by the High-Priest, in dressing the seven Lamps*, for Epistles or Letters to be sent either to the *Bishops* of the several Churches, or to the *Churches represented* *
by

ment and Use : “ The Prophecies must be like *Ænig-
ma’s*, which, till they have been well explained, seem
“ unintelligible ; but, when one hath hit right upon them,
“ they appear so clear, that they cannot otherwise be
“ understood.”

* I do not remember any Thing in the Epistles of St.
Paul,

by the *Bishops*, has been the Occasion of wide Interpretations, perhaps, much Perplexity. For, whilst Commentators have considered, what they call, *the seven Epistles*, in a Manner separate from, and independent of, the *Imagery* and *Action* in Vision ; some interpreting them as of a *private personal* Concern, containing Commendations, or Reproaches, respecting the then *Pastors*, their Duty and Conduct ; others, as of a *public extensive* Design, describing the different successive States of the Church in those Periods of Time, which, in the subsequent *Visions*, are distinguished by *Seals*, *Trumpets*, and *Vials* ; the *Scheme* is overlooked by them all : and if, by the former, the Design of the *Spirit of Prophecy* is restrained and limited to a few Men invested with Office ; by the latter, it is greatly clouded, every *Name* and *Thing*, upon their Plan, having a *remote*, as well as *mystical* Sense ; and plain Hints of Facts, or Historical Matters, which point out the true State of Things, in those Churches, are converted into typical Notices, and Representations of Events in Times long to come. But what Ground is there to conceive it probable, that the Churches, which are *mystically* represented by *the seven Stars*, and *the seven golden Candlesticks*, are, themselves, *mystical Signs* of the Church in general,

Paul, *St. Peter*, *St. James*, or any where else in the Writings of the New Testament, that will support the Supposition, that the Bishops, or Pastors, were *Representatives* of their Flocks.

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in so many successive Periods *? This is, evidently, to *multiply Mysteries*, and to obscure, rather than explain the Prophecy; at least it appears so to me †.

But though this *Vision* was of proper and immediate Concern to the *seven Asiatic Churches*, containing a Revelation of *their* State, and of Circumstances relative to *them*, and was written specially for *their Use*, in that Age: And though what each *Section* contains

* Because *the Things seen* are a *Mystery*; must the *Things* that are mentioned in the Writings after them, e. g. *Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Antipas, Balaam, Jezebel*; or any Tenet or Practice censured, or Doctrine inculcated;—I say, must all or any of these, therefore, be *Mysteries* too? It is true, some of the Names and Terms are used *mystically*, i. e. by Way of Similitude: But then, the Reason and Use of those borrowed Names and Terms are obvious, and may easily be accounted for.

† Had the learned Dr. *Henry More* first settled the Imagery, its Formation and Expression, and then considered the Epistles therewith; I am persuaded he would have abated of his *twenty Arguments* in Proof, that *the seven Epistles to the seven Churches* are a Prophecy of the State of the Church cast into *seven Intervals* from the Beginning thereof to the last Judgment; and he would have seen, why Mention is made of *holding seven Stars* to *Ephesus*; the *second Death* to *Smyrna*; the *Sword* to *Pergamos*; the *Morning Star* to *Thyatira*; and, lastly, why that Phrase, *He that hath an Ear*, &c. is sometimes the last Close of the Epistle, sometimes not: I say, that learned Person, had he considered the Parts of the Vision together, would have found those *Problems* capable of being solved by a *literal Sense* (I mean in the Imagery or *Things seen*.) without having Recourse to a more *mystical* one.

may

may be considered, “ as proper Directions and
 “ Encouragements, Cautions and Warnings in
 “ every State of the Church where there are
 “ like commendable Things to be praised and
 “ encouraged, or like Faults and Miscarriages
 “ to be reprov'd and amended ;” as a reputable Commentator * well observes : Yet, if we look upon the *Vision*, in the *Schematism* and *Formation* of it, we shall, probably, find it to be calculated for some other End. For, it is hard to conceive that the State of these Churches, and Things relative to them, in that Period, needed to be represented by *Imagery*, or to be communicated to them under the Veil of *Enigma's*. Things that are plain, or common and ordinary Occurrences, what all may know and be acquainted with, are not wont to be written or expressed in Cyphers ; but when they are so expressed, in order to stand for *Elements* or *first Principles*, they have their Use. This *first Vision*, being placed in this Light, answers a noble Design. It has some Connection with the subsequent *Visions*, which may be considered like that of a Portico to a Building, or an Introduction to a larger Discourse.

The *seven Churches* (who probably had the whole Book of the *Apocalypse*, as well as of this Part in particular, sent to them) were hereby entertained with a *Sample of Prophecy*

* Mr. Lowman.

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relative to themselves; something *preparatory*, to excite and engage Attention, and to afford them a Specimen and Rule, whereby to judge of the Prophetic Scenes, respecting distant Events, after exhibited. If the symbolical Nature of this *Vision* was obvious to them, which, for Reasons already suggested, I think it must, each Church could easily perceive which was its *own Symbol* among the Branches; could apply the Names descriptive of Characters, in the *Writings*, to the particular Persons they were intended for, as well as investigate the moral Instructions, and Notices, covertly expressed, which was of present and great Concern unto them. The Knowledge and Understanding of these Matters, pertaining to *this Vision*, could not be so abstruse and difficult to them, as it is to us at this Distance of Time. And by a thorough Acquaintance with, and Comprehension hereof, they were prepared to understand somewhat of the *other Visions*; to look upon the *Objects* in them also as *Mysteries* *; in which one Thing appeared to the Eye, and another to the Mind; and, by the Help of the Emblems, with their re-

* *Mysteries* in Revelation, are Things published and made known by Way of *Parable* and *Similitude*; and not *Things inconceivable by our ordinary Faculties*. However the Grecian Vulgar might be cheated into Fear and Reverence, and a Belief literally of the Imagery exhibited in their *Mysteries*; the Philosophers knew them to be *Allegories* and *Symbols*, and chiefly sought the Moral of them.

spective Story and Device, to see, as through a Glass darkly, what the Condition of the Christian Church in general, its Friends and Enemies, would be to the End of Time. For,

All the *Visions* have a *Similarity* in common to the first, viz. they consist of *Hieroglyphical Images*, or *Emblems*, representing supernatural, moral, or sensible Things, with *Labels*, or *Voices*, or *Speeches*, by Way of Elucidation, in the parabolic and figurative Style. And, to shew that the *first* was designed to be a Sample, Prelude, or a preliminary Piece to the *other Visions*, some principal Things are carried from that to them. Thus the *seven Spirits of God*, mentioned Chap. iii. 1, see No. 37. are, in the following *Vision*, in the Hieroglyphics, among the Things that are seen, being, with God, represented by *seven Lamps of Fire burning before the Throne*, Chap. iv. 5. but, with Christ, by *seven Horns and seven Eyes*, Chap. v. 6. The Meaning of the *seven Spirits*, being understood in the *first Vision*, affordeth some Light on them in the *second*, although they (being with different Subjects) are there differently represented. Again; the *great Star*, which, at the Sounding of the *third Trumpet*, fell from Heaven, burning as it were a Lamp; and it fell upon the *third Part of the Rivers*, and upon the *Fountains of Waters*;—and many Men died of the Waters, because they were made bitter, Chap. viii. 10, 11. as it is the same mystic Character, or a like Symbol, with the Stars, or Angels of the *seven Churches*,

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Churches, they (the seven Churches) might be led directly to interpret it, of an *Apostasy* of some famous Church, which would occasion the Springs and Channels of Knowledge to be grievously infected over a great Part of the World. So again, as to *Time*: If the *ten Days Tribulation* of the Church in *Smyrna*, Chap. ii. 10, was not, literally, *ten* natural succeeding Days, and yet a certain determinate Space of Time was included therein, viz. *ten Weeks*, see No. 34. it might probably afford them this Rule of Interpretation, that where the Spirit of Prophecy has not left the Key, or Standard, of the Time given, as it has of the Propheying of the two Witnesses, Chap. xi. 3. of the Woman in the Wilderness, Chap. xii. 6, 14. And of the Power of the Beast, Chap. xiii. 5. (in which Places we find a *Day* signifies a *Year*, a Year is called a *Time*, a *Month* is *thirty Years*: And by the Equality of Time respecting these Events they are judged to be *synchronal*) I say, where the Spirit of Prophecy has not left the Key or Standard of the Time given, we are to look for it in the Nature of the Subject.

These Instances may suffice to shew the Connection, or Use, of the first, in respect to the other *Visions* recorded in the *Book of the Apocalypse*; that it is of such a Nature, that if the Churches, whom it immediately concerned, gave but due Attention to it, it would enlighten, prepare and dispose them to judge of the Nature and chief Import of the other

Visions.

Visions. If this be granted, and there is any proper Reasoning in what has been said, it will follow, that if we are *initiated in*, or are acquainted with, *the Mystery of the seven Stars, and the seven golden Candlesticks*, we shall be better qualified to see and examine the other *Mysteries*.

2. This *Vision* beareth some Marks of its being *the Revelation of Jesus Christ**, or of having a *divine Original* from him; and this is what it challengeth, *Chap. i. 1, 10.*

If we look for the Original of the Imagery, or first Draught of this emblematical Piece, we find it exhibited to *Moses*, in the Mount, by a *Model* or *Pattern*; and, afterwards, appearing in his *Imitation*, in the High-Priest *dressing the Lamps*. From that *Type* and *Example*, what a noble Device, or Allegory, here ariseth! The Scene openeth, the principal Figures are seen in their proper Forms and Habitudes; and these afford and furnish out, with the Alteration of very few Circumstances, Hieroglyphics, Emblems, and Metaphors, sufficient to express properly, in a strong, yet easy Manner, the Dignity, Work, and Office

* If this Book be not *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, it must be an *Imposture*, and a Forgery that ought to be exposed and rejected. But if it be HIS REVELATION, that which God gave unto him, to shew unto his Servants Things which will be shortly a-doing, and which he sent and signified by his Angel unto his Servant John:—A Disesteem and Neglect of it, by *Christians*, is perhaps as great a *Paradox*, as any contained in the Book itself.

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of the Man *Christ Jesus*, as well as the Duty, Danger, and Interest of seven particular Churches. Nothing confused, nor low, nor extravagant appears; but the whole is simple, orderly, and decorous; suitable to the Plan, and the moral instructive End of the *Vision*. How much Wisdom and Knowledge, what admirable Skill and Judgment are here apparent *? Is it possible this noble Contrivance, this regular consistent *Scheme*, should be the Composition of a *wild Enthusiast*? The Freaks of Fancy, tempered with Superstition and profound Melancholy. Now Enthusiasm, a *noble Writer* † observes, in the Nature of the Thing, can have no Unity. If it be the Effect of Enthusiasm, I will venture to say, it is of such an Enthusiasm, as is not to be equalled in the World.

* “ Indeed, says *Dionysius of Alexandria*, some of
 “ our Ancestors disowned and wholly rejected this Book;
 “ confuting every Chapter, and demonstrating it to be
 “ an unknown and senseless Work, and that the Title
 “ is forged; for they say it is not *John’s*: Neither is it
 “ a *Revelation*, because it is covered over with so thick
 “ and dark a Veil of Ignorance: And that not only no
 “ Apostle, but also no holy or ecclesiastic Person, could
 “ have been the Compiler of this Work: But that it was
 “ *Cerintus*, the Founder of the Heresy, called from
 “ him the *Corinthian Heresy*, who was desirous to have
 “ a creditable Name prefixed before his Forgery.”
Euseb. Book VII. Chap. 25. Though all such Kind of
 Writings are questionable, and very fit to be examined,
 to see if they will bear the Test of sober and impartial
 Reason; yet whether, and how far, these Persons incurred
 the Censure of *speaking Evil of the Things they knew not*,
 let the Reader determine.

† Lord Barrington.

Those

Those that are well acquainted with *Christ's Manner* of Instruction, which was by *Parable*; who know how easy, just, and natural, as well as forcible and striking his Similitudes and Comparisons were, and what a Redundancy of Matter he couched in a few short Sentences; will, by the Style, judge him to be the original *genuine Author* * of this *Revelation*, who exceeded all other Prophets in the Manner, as well as Matter of his Instructions, and *spake as never Man spake*.

Again, in respect to the *Notions* and *Principles* which are expressed and inculcated in this *Vision*, or Scheme of Revelation, they are so sublime, pure, and rational, as to render it morally impossible that it should be the artful Invention of a *wicked Impostor*. To instance

* As to the *Dissemblance* of this Book, compared with the other of St. *John's* Writings; whence some have conjectured, that *this was not the Work of that Apostle*:—I beg Leave to observe, that there is a Difference in the Sort or Kind of Writings themselves; that, in his Epistles, St. *John* may be supposed at Liberty to express his own divine Notions in his own Terms; and, in his History, to use his own Phraseology and Style in relating Facts: But, in his Revelation, as the Figures and Images, if not also the very Words and Expressions, did, as it were, obtrude themselves on, and were dictated to, him, his proper Work was, to transcribe and copy *those Things he saw, and heard*. See Bishop *Sherlock's* Dissertation on the Authority of the Second Epistle of St. Peter; where his Lordship's excellent Criticism, on the Difference of Style observed in the second Chapter from the other two of that Epistle, may, I think, be applied to vindicate the Genuineness of this Book, in respect to the like Objection.

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in a few Particulars. That *Christians* are to shine as Lights in the World:— That they are under the special Inspection, Care, and Government of *Jesus Christ*:— That, in them, *Fraud* and *Deceit*, *Uncharitableness*, *Lasciviousness*, *Idolatry*, *Pride*, *Hypocrisy*, and *Self-conceit*, are abhorrent to him: And that the Practice of *Truth* and *Righteousness*, *Love* and *Charity*, *Temperance*, *Sobriety*, *Meekness*, *Patience*, and *Fortitude*, are necessary to preserve them in his Favour, and qualify them for the lasting Honours of a future World. These, and such like, are the Notions and Principles, expressed and inculcated throughout *this Vision*, and which make up the Spirit, Life, and Soul of the Piece. Doth this look like the *Composition* of a *Sensualist* * ? The *cunningly devised Fable* of some arrant Cheat ? Or, rather, has it not indelible Marks of Divinity ? A Mystery of Godliness, a Scheme calculated, not to supersede Reason, distort and depress the human Mind, but, to make *Christians*

* They who, in ancient Times, rejected this Book, and attributed it to *Cerintus*, make him to be a *carnal and voluptuous Man*, see *Euseb.* Book VII. Chap. 25. Now, whatever Work he might forge under this Character (as it seems there appeared many, as the *Apocalypse* of *St. Peter*, of *St. Paul*, of *St. Thomas*, of *Adam*, of *Abraham*, of *Moses*, of *Elias*, &c. all in, or pretty near, the Apostolic Age, and wrote, as *Sir Isaac Newton* well observes, in Imitation of some true one) there is Nothing in this Book, so far as we have considered it, that has any the least Tendency to serve the Purpose of carnal Pleasure and Sensuality.

wiser, and better, and braver than other Men, by exhibiting their Relation to *Christ*, the Lord and Head of the Church and World, and their Duty resulting from that Relation?

Again, if we consider the *chief Object* of this *Vision*, or the principal *Subject* here revealed; and that is, the spiritual or true internal Constitution of *seven Churches*, there is still less Room to suspect it, of Forgery and Illusion. The Representations, and the Manner in which they are given, of these Churches, seem too bold and artless to be suspected of either Flattery or Falshood. A thorough Knowledge of them, both in general and particular, is claimed by the Person who draws them: “*I know thy Works.*”—“*Thou hast there them that hold the Doctrine of Balaam.*”—“*Thou sufferest that Woman Jezabel.*”—“*Thou hast a few Names which have not defiled their Garments, &c.*” This is presenting them with their own *Pictures*; and is like bringing of a *Copy* to the *Original*, or an Appeal to Facts, and obvious and well known Circumstances, and resting the *Credibility* of the *Vision* thereon. For, these Churches had it intirely in their Power to confute and explode the *Vision*, as a *Counterfeit*, if any one Fact, or Representation, was false. Add to this, that these *Representations* were *written in a Book*, in order to be preserved, and read by other Churches, in future Times; and as many Things, which affect the Honour and Reputation of these Churches, are
here

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here contained, they were immediately concerned, and greatly interested, to detect the Forgery, if they could prove, or had any Ground to suppose it to be such. The *Greeks of Asia* wanted not for Sense and Learning, or Power and Capacity, to resent an Injury, and to do themselves Justice in so delicate an Affair. And as to their consenting to, and joining in, the Imposture, *to make a Book that should be venerated by other Churches*, that, I think, cannot be supposed: For, as a very *sagacious and fine Writer* * observes, “ Accom-
“ complices in a Fraud are obliged to shew
“ greater Regards to each other; such Free-
“ dom belongs to Truth alone.”

Seven Churches, are not so easy to be imposed upon, by a Fraud of this Nature, as one †. And if the Characters of some leave
Room

* *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*, p. 43.

† It is granted that there have been in the *Christian Church*, as well as among *Jews, Pagans, and Mahometans*, forged Revelations that have censured *Lying*; and *lying Visions*, whose Images have been grand and magnificent: But then, Inconsistencies and Contradictions, false Principles, or extravagant Whimsies, or Fame, or Power to the *artful Visionary*, or his Party, one or other, or all of these, have notified the Delusion. The prophetic Visions so much in Vogue about the End of the *second*, and Beginning of the *third Century*, instead of sinking the Credit and Reputation of this, of *St. John*, will, by evident Circumstances, in the Opinion of Men of Sense, be a Foil rather to set it off. For, to cite the Words of the learned *Dr. Middleton*, “ Whatever Ground there
“ might

Room to suspect them of a Temper liable to be imposed upon, as *two* of them actually were in some Degree; it must be remembered, by what Kind of Teachers that was, *namely*, by such as studied to gratify the *sensual* Passions; who taught it lawful for *Christians* to join their Fellow-Citizens in the Celebration of their *idolatrous Festivals*, and to minister to, or practise, *Lewdness*: (the very Reverse to that Purity the *Vision* is calculated to recommend and promote:) And also, that the Favour, they shewed to those *Seaucers*, is the *Crime* for which these Churches are censured. All the Churches were not in a Disposition to be deluded by any Pretence to Mystery and Inspiration. That at *Ephesus*, we find, signalized themselves, and has here acquired a Commendation, chiefly for their pious

“ might be, in those primitive Ages, either to reject or
 “ to allow the Authority of those Visions, yet from all
 “ the Accounts of them, that remain to us in these
 “ Days, there seems to be the greatest Reason to suspect,
 “ that they were all contrived, or authorized at least,
 “ by the leading Men of the Church, for the Sake of
 “ moderating and governing, with more Ease, the unruly
 “ Spirit of the Populace, in those Times of Danger and
 “ Difficulty. For they are generally applied, to excuse
 “ the Conduct of particular Persons, in some Instances
 “ of it liable to Censure; or to enforce some particular
 “ Doctrine or Discipline, warmly pressed by some, and
 “ not well relished by others; or to confirm Things not
 “ only trifling and frivolous, but sometimes even super-
 “ stitious and hurtful to true Religion.” *Free Inquiry*,
 &c. p. 109.

Zeal

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Zeal and Affiduity in detecting Counterfeits that came to them with the Pretext of *Apostolical Authority*, Chap. ii. 2.

In fine, the Specimen *this Vision* affordeth of the *Knowledge of future Events*, is another Evidence of its being divine. It is foretold of the *Christians at Smyrna*, Behold, * *the Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days.* Though the Thing foretold, viz. the Persecution of the *Christians*, by the *Jews*, might, at that Time †, be Matter of a probable Conjecture; yet how long their Influence with the Government of the City should last, in

* The Symbolical Being, in Vision, that represents the Adversaries of God's People, is called the *Devil* and *Satan*, Chap. xii. 9. Hence, perhaps, the early Writers of the Church describe their Persecutors, whose Names in Point of Prudence they might not mention, as also the particular Spring of their Sufferings, which they might not know, under this Character. Thus we read of "Satan endeavouring with much Earnestness;"—and, "the Devil caused one Biblias to be brought forth, &c." *Euseb.* Book V. Chap. 1. If a certain moral Disposition (as well as some natural Disease) was known by this Character, we are less at a Loss to seek for a Solution of *Devils ejected by the first Christians*. I add to this Note, (what might more properly have been placed under No. 34.) that the *Jews*, when they became Persecutors of Christ and his Religion, were of the *Devil*.

† I follow the Opinion of Sir *Isaac Newton*, that the Book of the *Apocalypse* was written some Years before the Destruction of Jerusalem. I see Nothing in the epistolary Sections, that does not well agree with the then State of the Church; and, as to other Proofs, for the early Date of this Book, I wave them.

the

the Tribulation of that Church, could be the Object only of divine Foreknowledge, and Matter of Revelation. The Event, corresponding with the Prediction, must necessarily prove the Oracle *inspired*, as well as procure certain Credit to the Predictions relating to Events in more distant Periods. Again, to the Church in *Philadelphia* it is foretold, the sensible Mortification the *Jews* would meet with in their City; and also, their own Safety and Security in an approaching Storm of Persecution. These were Events of great Concern to these Churches, and such as, in their own Nature, seem knowable to God only, who hath the Hearts of Princes in his Hands, and every Spring in human Politics under his Direction. These, and other Discoveries, God gave unto *Jesus Christ*, who sent and signified it by his Angel to his Servant John. To add one Instance more, With respect to the pretended Prophetess at *Thyatira*, it is foretold, *Behold, I will cast her into a Bed, and them that commit Adultery with her into great Tribulation, except they repent of their Deeds. And I will kill her Children with Death.* The Infliction of Diseases on Delinquents was one of those miraculous Powers which attended the Apostles, see *1 Cor. v. 5. 1 Tim. i. 20.* Here is a Prediction of the Exercise of this Power on a particular Subject. And when the Judgment, foretold, was executed on this Fornicator (who, for her Part, seems to have been

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incorrigible) what an Evidence must arise to the Truth of the Revelation, and the Authority of the Revealer! A stronger Proof could not be given. By this, the Oracle declares, “ *All the Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts : And I will give unto every one of you according to your Works.*” These Predictions, at the Time when the Revelation was given and first published, were *shortly to come to pass* ; the Time, for their Accomplishment, *was at Hand*, Chap. i. 1, 3. The Events, correspondent to which, are so many Evidences of the Certainty of the future *Coming of Christ with Clouds*, mentioned v. 7. (and first predicted by *Daniel*, Chap. vii. 10.—14. When the *Judgment* * shall sit, and an extensive glorious *Dominion, and Kingdom, shall be given unto him* :) The Signs and Acts of his present Rule and Authority among the Churches in *Asia*.

If, in Objection to this Argument, it be said, “ We want a History of the Churches, in order to know the Fulfilment of these Predictions, before we admit them in Evidence.” I answer, Though we have not a particular History of the Churches, we have particular Circumstances, in History, sufficient

* *The Day of Judgment*, in the ancient Jewish and prophetic Sense, signifies a *continued Time* (so Mr. Mede thought) and not the *last determinate Day* only, or final Period of Time.

to support the Evidence in Question. For, by all the Writings of the early Times of Christianity, it appears, these Churches received the Book of the *Apocalypse* in the Character it bears, and held it in the highest Veneration on Account of its Prophecies. Now, as the Prophecies in *this Vision* respected *Things which were shortly to come to pass* (by which they are distinguished from those of the *subsequent Vision*, which respected *Things which must be hereafter*, Chap. iv. 1.) and were, therefore, peculiarly recommended to the Perusal and Study of the *Christians* of that Age, or of the Churches immediately concerned: *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that bear the Words of this Prophecy, and keep those Things which are written therein, for the Time is at Hand.* I say, as the Churches were bid, and prepared to expect the speedy Accomplishment of the Words of this Prophecy, what, but correspondent Events, could establish its Credit? A Man must have a mean Opinion indeed of the first *Christian Churches*, to imagine them to esteem and venerate a Book, upon Account of the Predictions therein contained, if they found themselves only *amused*, or *abused* thereby.—

“ The Church, nearest the Times of writing this Book, received it with so full
 “ Consent, that in a very few Years, as Dr.
 “ *Mills* observes, it was acknowledged and
 “ placed in the Number of Apostolical Writings,
 “ not only by the Churches of *Asia*,

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“ but by the neighbouring Churches of *Syria*
“ and *Samaria*, by the more distant Churches
“ of *Africa* and *Egypt*, by *Rome*, and the other
“ Churches of *Europe* *.” See this Kind of
Evidence at large in the reverend and learned
Dr. *Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History* ;
and more briefly in *the Observations* of the
great Sir *Isaac Newton*, p. 246 to 250, whose
Opinion it was, that the *Apostles themselves*,
particularly *St. Peter*, and the *Author of the*
Epistle to the Hebrews, READ and STUDIED
this Book ; and who saith, — “ I do not
“ indeed find any other Book of the New Tes-
“ tament so strongly attested, or commented
“ upon so early as this.”

To conclude. As this *Vision* beareth some
Marks of a *divine* Original, it will, perhaps,
be found, on Examination, free from *two*
Characters of *Imposture*, which attended the
Pagan Oracles, viz. a deceitful Ambiguity,
and Priestcraft.

It is well known what an uncertain, or
else double, Sense and Meaning ran through
very many of the pretended Revelations of
the *Heathen* Gods. Even where the Matters
in Question were of a private Nature, perso-
nal, and relative to the then Time, the An-
swers given were for the most Part ambi-
guous, perplexed, and intricate. An equivocal
Use of Words, in Matters of Information, is
a Mark of Fraud and Dissimulation ; it dis-

* Mr. *Lowman's* Preface.

covers a bad Intention, as well as a Consciousness of Guilt, a Fear of Detection. And no other Reason * can be assigned, why those *Oracles* were delivered in so dark and indeterminate a Manner, but to conceal their Ignorance, whilst they amused their Votaries. Then, as to *the Mysteries*, the best Security those *Oracles* had, an inviolable Secrecy was enjoined in them; and any Discovery of *the Things seen*, the *Ceremonies and solemn Rites*, was not only considered as an Act of the highest Impiety, but such Freedom was sure to involve the Person in great and lasting Inconveniencies in Life. The Case here seems vastly different. *The Mystery and Oracle in Vision* are *written*, in order to be exposed, and, like Matters of public Notice among the Ancients, may be made *plain upon Tables, that he may run that readeth*. For, *mystical* as this Revelation is, it is one uniform consistent Scheme, grounded on a certain Plan; and every Word, Metaphor, and Sign, brought to its proper *Device*, will shew the Occasion of the Expression, is capable of a reasonable Interpretation, and of yielding rational Improvement.

* Although it be not necessary to Prophecy to be always obscure, yet, such are the Nature and Kind of some Events, that a plain Relation or Description of them, in Prophecy, would hinder the Completion thereof, unless human Liberty and the general Course of Things were obstructed. Hence we may gather the Reason, Why Events of this Kind are almost always foretold by *Inspiration by Vision*; in which Sort of Prophecy, the *Seer* finds his Subject under the Cover of Images.

Again,

86 *Observations on the first Vision, &c.*

Again, the *Pagan Oracles* were in close Custody of the *Priests*, who had the sole Right of pronouncing, or interpreting, of them; and as the Means to consult the sacred Books were such as precluded all from examining them, except the *Priests*, their Craft was more than suspicious. Whereas here, the Vision is *written in a Book*, and presented to *seven Churches*, as containing Matters of great and general Concernment to them; with a repeated pressing Exhortation, in the Body of it, accompanied with Motives and Encouragements, to every Man of common Sense among them, to *read* and *understand* the same. The Arts and Tricks of designing Men seem guarded against in the best Manner that can be; for, maugre all the Difficulties, it is here made the Duty of *Christian People*, to *try them* that set up for *Apostles*, and *infallible Guides*; to examine the Revelation, and judge for themselves; to read with their own Eyes, and hear with their own Ears, *what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*. Which Right of *private Judgment*, in the Interpretation of this and other Prophecies, had *Christians* always maintained, with a sincere Regard to Truth, and Virtue; and Honesty,—it is highly probable, *the Revelation of Jesus Christ*, as it would then have had some Scenes of a different Construction, would also have been a Book more suitably respected, and better understood, than it is, at the present Day.

F I N I S.



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SECOND VISION
OF
St. JOHN.

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WITH
FOUR DISSERTATIONS
CONCERNING

- I. The Authority of the Book of *Revelations*.
- II. The Time when it was written.
- III. The Manner of Prophetical Inspiration.
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To which are added,

By way of APPENDIX,
REMARKS on a Species of Prophecy distinct from
and superior to Vision and Dream, as advanced
in a late ESSAY on 2 PET. i. 16, &c.

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P R E F A C E.

F. Calmet, in his *Bibliotheca Sacra*, gives an Account of about One hundred Commentators, besides those who have written Treatises and Dissertations on the *Apocalypse*. And indeed it was once in high Repute: “no [a] Man but thought it a fine thing to exercise his wit in the opening of such dark *Ænigma's*, either for Ostentation sake, or to delight himself with Allegories.”

After all, it hath been said, “No Book ever received less lustre, or had less Obligation to its Commentators;”—and that “to it hath happened what befel the Woman in the Gospel, *who suffered many things of many Physicians, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse.*” But leaving those Reflections,

The Reader may know so much of the History of the following *Observations*, that they were first occasioned by a doubt the Author had of the Genuineness of the *Apocalypse*, on account of the dark and perplexed Manner in which it appeared to him: And that its Pretensions to a Divine Authority and Inspiration were at the same time too great to permit him to give it up

[a] *Paræus Pref. to Comment. on Rev.*

without some previous Examination. This set him to work.

And now, so far as his Leisure and Ability would allow him to extend his Inquiries into the Book, so far he thinks he finds it intelligible, compiled with great Judgment and Accuracy, and worthy of the Title it bears.

He had not, indeed, resolved on publishing the *Observations on the Second Vision*, until a late elaborate Piece by Dr. *Hodges*, entitled, *ELIHU*, fell into his Hands, wherein the Doctrine of the *Cberubim* is set in a fanciful Light; of which some Notice is taken in the Notes.

The *Dissertations*, that are annexed, may be thought not of equal Importance by all: However, they are relative to the Subject: As is also the *Appendix*, wherein the Author has been led to ascertain the Degrees, or different Species of Prophetical Communication, beyond what first he intended.

He dares not affirm, he is certainly right in every Particular; especially, where he differs from Persons of great Learning and Eminence. A high Probability is the most that can be pretended to in things of this sort. How far that is of his Side, the impartial Reader must judge.

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

SECOND VISION

OF

St. J O H N.

I. **A**FTER [a] St. *John* had been fully instructed in *the Mystery of the Seven Stars, and the Seven golden Candlesticks*, as he looked upward, he beheld a Passage to *open in Heaven*; from whence also he heard the *first Voice*, which ushered in his former Vision, *as it were of a Trumpet*, which said now unto him, with great Emphasis, *Come*

[a] *After this.*] It is plain the *Visions* are here distinguished the one from the other; as also, that both were ushered in after the like solemn Manner, with an articulate loud Voice, *as it were of a Trumpet*. But as to what Space of Time intervened, whether all the Visions were given on one and the same Day, according to Mr. *Brightman*; or the several Visions were received at several Times, like *Daniel's*, as Dr. *Hammond* thinks; are Points not so plain, nor perhaps necessary to be determined.

2 *Observations on the second Vision*

up hither [b], and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter, Chap. iv. 1.

2. Whereupon St. *John* was immediately, in a prophetic Rapture, taken up into Heaven, the Theatre, or Scene of this glorious Vision; where he beheld the following Objects; *A Throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the Throne, &c.*

3. It is probable, by the Attitude and Posture described, as well as by the after Mention of his *Right Hand*, Chap. v. 1, 7. that the one Personage sitting on this Throne, representing God, was in the likeness of human Shape or

[b] Sir *Isaac Newton* supposeth the Temple to be the Scene of this, as well as of the former Vision: And that St. *John* was now called up to the Eastern Gate of the great Court, where he beheld the Mercy-Seat upon the Ark of the Testament, *Observat.* p. 257. But with Deference to so great a Name, tho' the *Jews* might respect the Mercy-Seat as the Throne of God, when they considered him as their King, with a kind of local Divinity; yet I do not recollect they ever called the Holy of Holies by the Name of *Heaven*. On the contrary, he, who was the God of the *Jews*, was distinguished from all other Gods, by having likewise his Place and special Residence beyond the Reach of sensible Things. *The God of Heaven* was, therefore, his peculiar Title, *Ezek. i. 2, 5. Dan. ii. 44.* There they supposed his Throne to be, where he exercised his sovereign Dominion over all Creatures, see *Psal. xi. 4. ciii. 19.* This empyreal Region, or *third Heaven*, which has an Existence in Prophecy and Revelation, and of which the Tabernacle and Temple were a *Shadow*, I take to be the true Scene of the second Vision. This is a Stage, or Theatre, better suited to the Machinery that is exhibited in the Drama; as also well chosen to afford St. *John* a Representation of Events that were to happen in different Parts of the distant Earth.

Form;

Form ; as was *the Likeness of the Appearance on the Throne*, seen by *Ezekiel*, Chap. i. 26, 27. And also the *Ancient of Days*, whom *Daniel* beheld [c], Chap. vii. 9. But as to Majesty and Splendor he *was to look upon like a Jasper and a Sardine Stone* [d] ; having all that Brightness

[c] Tho' it be an high Degree of Folly and Ignorance to change, or transfer *the Glory of the incorruptible God, to an Image made like to corruptible Man*, and to worship him under that Representation, *Rom. i. 23.* yet it must not, it cannot be denied, that God condescended to represent himself under a *Likeness of human Shape or Form*, to his Servants the Prophets. And if the Bulk of the *Israelites*, for wise and good Reasons, *saw no Manner of Similitude on the Day the Lord spoke unto them in Horeb, Deut. iv. 15.* the Sight of the Glory of the Lord being in their Eyes, *like devouring Fire on the Top of the Mount, Exod. xxiv. 17.* yet the *Similitude* of the Lord was familiar to *Moses*, *Numb. xii. 8.* and on the Day they entered into Covenant, was seen by him, together with *Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu*, and seventy of the Elders, *Exod. xxiv. 9, 10.* *They saw the God of Israel : And there was under his Feet, as it were a paved Work of a Sapphire Stone.* When there is a Reason, as in this and other propheticall Visions, to represent *the Holy Blessed One*, there is no visible Likeness so fit for that high Honour as *Man's*, who is *made after the Image of God*, *Gen. i. 26, 27.* In the instructive Scheme of *Christianity*, that great *Mystery of Godliness*, the *Man Christ Jesus*, is *the Image of the invisible God : All the Fulness of the Godhead*, which in other Characters were merely symbolical, and visionary, *dwelt in him bodily*, or after a more real substantial Manner.

[d] Those Commentators expose themselves much, who attempt to extract a spiritual Mystery out of the Colour of those Stones. I apprehend *Naturalists* are not agreed about the Stones themselves, whether what we call a *Jasper* and a *Sardine Stone* are the same with those so called by the Ancients. However, the Reader ought not

4 *Observations on the second Vision*

and Lustre in himself, which Monarchs borrow from their richest Gems, & 3.

4. A *Rainbow*, one of the most beautiful *Phænomenon* in Nature, formed a Canopy or triumphal Arch round about the Throne, ex-

to be ignorant, that *the incomprehensible Distinction of three Persons in the Trinity*, is one special Mystery that has been discovered in the *Jewels* named in this, and the following Verse. 'Tis true, there are *three* of these Stones; but the Colours of them are not ascribed to one and the same Object. *He that sat upon the Throne was to look upon like a Jasper and a Sardine Stone*; but it is not said *like an Emerald* too: That was the Likeness of the *Rainbow*—He that sat upon the Throne was *ONE*, one Personage, the Semblance of one God; not three Persons. I do not any where, in our Sacred Books, find an Image of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. That Defect has indeed been supplied by the Invention of a *Triangle*; a Figure seen even in some Protestant Books of Devotion, as well as in some Places of their public Worship: Under which Image it seems, God appeared to *Christopher Cotterus*. As the Account is somewhat curious, and forg'd Revelations may have the use of a Foil to set off the true, I will transcribe it. “Eight Days afterwards (*i. e.* after his third Vision, which was *Aug. 1, 1620.*) he beheld a Triangle, lifted above the Earth, and hanging in the Air, from whence he heard three Clocks, like to one another in the Sound, and every one of them striking *Eleven*. At that time he understood not the Meaning of it; which was revealed unto him the 26th of the same Month following, *viz. That in that Triangle, or three-fold Dimension, he might behold the most Holy Trinity; and by the Uniformity of the Sound of the three Clocks, he might acknowledge the Unity of the Trinity; and that the Number of the eleventh Hour did admonish, it was high Time to arise from the Sleep of Sin,*” &c. Vid. the *Prophecies of three famous eminent Prophets in Germany*, p. 31. Indeed *Christiana Poniatovia*, another of those *Enthusiasts*, pretended to have seen the *three Persons* of like Stature, and
tremely

tremely grand and pleasing to the Sight, whose variegated Colours were transparent *like unto an Emerald*, & 3.

5. *Round about the Throne*, or on the right and left thereof, in Form of a Semicircle [e],

in Glory equal. Her Words are these: " I was in an
" Extacy for the Space of three Hours, and saw what
" followeth. The *Lord* came unto me clothed in such a
" glorious and shining Robe, that my Eyes could hardly
" endure the Splendor of it; and not long afterwards fol-
" lowed the *Ancient*, all in white, before whom there did
" go the third Person, in Stature like unto them, but from
" the Head to the Foot like a Flame of Fire. And the
" Lord said unto me, Behold this Day we come unto thee,
" to declare unto thee *our Distinction in one Essence*, and
" in *one Equality* and Power of our Divinity. Thou seest
" here *three distinct Persons*, and yet but *one true, undi-*
" *vided, and immortal God*," &c. Ibid. p. 81, 82. Whe-
" ther *these* are some of those *Images*, that Mr. *Jurieu* thought
" *great and magnific*:"—Sure I am, they are such as are
not to be met with in the Prophets of the *Old and New*
Testament.

[e] The *Jewish Sanhedrim*, the *Arcopagus* at *Athens*,
and all the Seats of the ancient *Theatres* for exhibiting
scenic Spectacles were disposed after this manner. Dr.
Hammond fancies that this Representation was taken from
the Council at *Jerusalem*, mentioned *Acts* xv. That is to
say, according to his Notion, " from *James*, the Arch-
" bishop of *Jerusalem*, sitting in his episcopal Chair, as
" *Metropolitan*, with the Bishops of *Judea* on their Seats
" on each hand of him." A groundless Conceit! If an
ecclesiastical Constitution of later times had not misled this
learned Person, he might have found some better Exam-
ple in the Visions of the old Prophets, see 1 *Kings* xxii. 19.
also *Dan*. vii. 9. which last Mr. *Mede* calls, " the Mother
" Text whence the *Jewish Church* grounded the Name
" and Expectation of the *great Day of Judgment*," B. iv.
Ep. xv.

6 Observations on the second Vision

were *Four and twenty Seats*, or lesser Thrones, ranged after the manner, probably, of a *Jewish Consistory*, or ancient Court of Justice.

6. Upon these Seats, St. John saw, *Four and twenty Elders sitting clothed like Priests, in white Raiment, and having on their Heads, like Kings, Crowns of Gold, &c. 4.*

7. It is probable these Characters, of august Elders, are taken from the *Twenty-four Chiefs* or Heads of the Courses of the *Levites*, who were separated by *David* to the Worship of the Temple, *1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7. to prophecy with Harps in the Songs of the Lord [f]*. If so, they

[f] Commentators are scarce more divided in any thing, than about these Characters, whence they are taken, and whom they represent? The Knowledge of the one may perhaps lead to the Knowledge of the other. As we cannot, from the Title of *Elders*, any more than from the Number, *Twenty-four*, positively determine from whence the Characters are taken, I have therefore added the *Employment* of these Personages, or the Parts assigned them to act, as a material Circumstance in our Rule of Inquiry. They worship God: They sing a new Song: They have every one of them Harps and golden Vials. Now, with whose Employment in the *Old Testament* will this well suit, but with the *Twenty-four Chiefs of the Levites*, who were separated to the Service, to sing prophetic Hymns, and to prophecy with Harps in the Songs of the Lord? See *1 Chron. xxv.* If it be said, "the *Levites* did not wear the white Tunic, but by an Innovation," *Joseph. Antiq. B. xx. c. xix.* Be it so: Neither did the Priests wear Crowns of Gold. Wherefore these Ornaments are the proper insignia, not of the Elders whomsoever they were, but of those whom they represented. If these Characters are taken, as is highly probable, from the *Twenty-four Heads of the Families of Levi*, we know for whom they stand, or who are represented by them, see *Numb. iii. 12.*

properly

properly represent the *First-born*, or a Church, or an Assembly of them; their white Raiment and crowns of Gold, wherewith they are clad and adorned, being descriptive of the high Dignity of Priests [g] Royal, belonging to those whom they personate.

8. The Bed of this glorious Throne, whereon the Semblance of Deity sat, seems as it were to have been, or to represent the very Centre of all the Elements, or Seat or Principle of Vitality and Motion, *out of which proceeded Lightnings, and Thundrings, and Voices [h], & 5.*

9. *Before the Throne*, disposed at some proper Distance, were *seven Lamps of Fire burning*, or flaming like Torches, which illuminated the Scene, and are the Emblems of the *Seven Spirits [i] of God*, or of those divine Gifts and

And I, behold I have taken the Levites from the Children of Israel, INSTEAD OF ALL THE FIRST-BORN. Chap. viii. 18. And I have taken the Levites FOR all the FIRST-BORN of the Children of Israel. If we are right in the Original of the Characters, the Application of them is just and easy.

[g] Such was the Dignity of the People of Israel, *Exod. xix. 6. And ye shall be unto me a Kingdom of Priests.* And such is the Dignity of the *Christians, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Ye are a Royal Priesthood.*

[h] I do not remember ever to have met with any thing that equals the Grandeur of this Throne. Universal Nature is here epitomized. From the Bench, beneath the Personage representing *Jehovah*, proceeded what were ever esteemed awful and tremendous, *Lightnings, and Thundrings, and Voices.*

[i] *The same Symbols may express different Notions in different Visions.* What personated the *Seven Churches* in the former Vision, personates, in this, the *seven-fold Graces of the Spirit.* It would be Injustice not to take notice how

8 *Observations on the second Vision*

Graces whereby we are assisted to behold the sacred Mysteries of prophetic Revelation, *ŷ* 5.

10. *And also before the Throne, in the Area of the Floor, there was as it were a Sea of Glass, or a Collection of Waters clear as Crystal, which could not but be a necessary, as well as an highly delightful Addition to the Grandeur of the Scene, wherein the Throne and Dominion of God are exhibited [k], ŷ 6.*

11. *In the midst of the Throne, and round*

careful the divine Author of this Composition has been, to prevent a Mistake where this Case happens; as in the Instance before us; that we might not apply the same Notion as that to the *Lamps* in the former Vision, we are told explicitly what they here stand for, *they are the Seven Spirits of God*.—The use of Lamps, in sacred Solemnities, is of great Antiquity. They were wont to be placed before the Statues of the Gods; and were borne before Kings and Emperors. The Seven Lamp-Sconce in the *Jewish Tabernacle*, was a necessary Piece of Furniture. In this Vision, the *Seven Lamps burning before the Throne*, not only enlighten and embellish the Scene, but do also well express the Illuminations of the Spirit of Truth, whereby we perceive the Things of God.

[k] The *Tabernacle* had a *Laver*, the *Temple* a *molten Sea*, Vessels suitable to the holy House of God, the King of *Israel*; the Waters of which were to cleanse and purify his Provisions and Attendants. The transparent Sea before the Throne, contributes much to the Ornament and Grandeur of the Scene; a Collection of Waters being, not only highly delightful to the Eastern People, but very fit and necessary to have a Place where the Throne and Dominion of God are exhibited. This Consideration alone may preclude those mystical Senses, which some very learned and pious Men have given Countenance to; such as the *Laver of Regeneration*; the *Blood of Christ*; the *Multitude of Christian People*, &c.

about

about the Throne [1], as necessary Appendages and Supporters thereof, *were four Beasts*, or living Creatures; known in the 'prophetic Language by the Name of *Cherubim*, Ezek. x. *which were full of Eyes before and behind*, whereby their great Knowledge and Sagacity are symbolically denoted, *Ÿ 6.*

12. These *Cherubim* [m] being diverse as to

[1] If the Bodies and Feet of the *Cherubim* resembled those of the *Ox*, the most useful Beast in the World, as is probable from Ezek. i. 7, 10. x. 12, 14. and the Bench of the Throne was like the Lid of the sacred Chest, which formed the *Mercy-Seat*; the *Cherubim* may well be supposed to stand, one at each Corner, bearing on their Hind-parts this Bed of State. This Position will perhaps account for the Expressions, *in the Midst of the Throne, and round about the Throne*; especially if the upper Wings of each *Cherub* were stretched out so as to meet one another, as it is probable they did, forming a Covering, or Crown-work round about, *Exod.* xxv. 20, 25.

[m] The *Cherubim* have no one determinate Figure in Scripture, but appear diverse according to their respective Employment, or Use in Vision. "All the several Descriptions which the Scripture gives us of *Cherubins* differ from one another; but all agree in representing a Figure composed of various Creatures, as a *Man*, an *Ox*, an *Eagle*, and a *Lion*." *Calmet*, art. C, H, E. *Josephus*, speaking of those on the *Mercy-Seat*, says, "they are flying Creatures: But their Form is not like to that of any of the Creatures which Men have seen: Tho' *Moses* said he had seen such Beings near the Throne of God," *Antiq.* B. iii. c. 6. This mixed Portraiture, this Variety of Shape and Form, is consistent enough with hieroglyphical Characters; for such, and such only are the *Cherubim*. How excellent the Contrivance, where the same symbolical Beings at once support and embellish the Throne, and represent all *animal Nature*!

10 *Observations on the second Vision*

their *Faces*, seem to be the hieroglyphical Characters of the Creatures of Life, or of all animal Beings in general : *The first Beast was in Face like a Lion*, the Representative of wild Animals ; *and the second Beast like a Calf, or Ox*, the Representative of tame Animals ; *and the third had a Face as of a Man*, and was the Representative of rational Animals ; *and the fourth Beast was in Face like a flying Eagle*, the Representative of airy Animals, & 7.

13. Moreover, these four Cherubim *had each of them six Wings about him* ; like the *Seraphs* [n], which the Prophet *Isaiab* saw,

[n] *Seraphim* and *Cherubim* are but different Names, probably, for one and the same kind of Beings seen in Vision. And whatever Work they have been occasionally sent to execute, whether of Judgment or Mercy, *Gen. iii. 24. Isa. vi. 6.* such always attend, bear and support the Royal Seat of God, as oft as he has shewn himself to his Servants the Prophets, under a sensible Representation of Glory. For whether he rode in a triumphal Car, or his Throne was set in Heaven or on Earth, these living Creatures were in his Equipage ; and, in one Shape or other, were seen *under, or round about the God of Israel, Ezek. x. 20.* Hence these following Expressions arise, *He rode upon a Cherub, and did fly : He sitteth, and dwelleth between the Cherubim, 2 Sam. xxii. 11. 2 Kings xix. 15. Psalm xviii. 10. lxxx. 1. xcix. 1. The Cherubim of Glory shadowing the Mercy-Seat, made by Moses, were no other than an Imitation and Copy of the Exhibition of these heavenly Things to him, Heb. viii. 5.* And it is remarkable, that those that were made after the Pattern which *David* had, were for either a *Chariot* or a *Throne, 1 Chron. xxviii. 18.* The Nature and Use of the four living Creatures, in this Vision, *in the Midst and round about the Throne*, to bear and embellish it, being so very apparent, one cannot but

Chap.

Chap. vi. 2, whereby they formed, on occasion, a Chariot, or flying Throne; which *Wings*

wonder that learned Men, instead of perceiving an easy fine Design and Intention, should labour to make them express particular personal Characters, that have either no Place here, or can be answered with no Propriety by them. Some Commentators, following the Conjecture of *Irenæus*, have referred them to the *four Evangelists*, as their proper Types and Emblems. Others, again, to *four* of the *Apostles*, *Peter* and *James* or *John*, and *Matthew* or *Barnabas*, and *Paul*, imagined to be then in *Judea*. Some suppose them to describe the *Priesthood*, or the *Bishops*, *Pastors*, and *Elders* of the Church: And others, on the contrary, make them to be significative of the *People*. See *Hammond*, *Grotius*, *Jurieu*, &c. But as if all these Conjectures had failed in Extravagance, a modern Divine, Dr. *Walter Hodges*, *Provost* of *Oriel College*, *Oxford*, in a late elaborate Work, intituled *ELIHU*, calls the Visages of these four Animals, the *Faces of God*, and makes them to be no less than *his Substitutes*, the *Representatives of the Trinity in Unity*. This Conceit put me in mind of what the *Romish Church* calls, the *Perfection* and *Complement of the Trinity*; the *Virgin Mary*; whose Divinity the *Collyridians*, and other ancient Heretics, acknowledged; and I could not but think it very possible to dispose of one of the four living Creatures to the Use of the holy Virgin-Mother; unless *Theophilus's* Hint was taken (the first Author, according to Mr. *Whiston*, that applied the Word *Trinity*, to the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost) who says, “You may have a *Quaternary*, if you add the Church to them;” for sure a *Quaternary* is here. But I found the good Doctor had some Regard to *Arithmetick*, as well as to the Doctrines of some of our first Reformers. However, I cannot but think he has made too serious and important a Point of his Notion of the *Cherubim*, considering the little Appearance it has of Truth. The Reason, according to him, why *three* Persons of the divine Essence, are represented by *four* Animals, is, on purpose to describe to us the Man

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were also *full of Eyes within*, like the *Wheels* of the *Cherubim* in *Ezekiel's* Vision, when he saw the *Likeness of the Glory of the Lord*, to ride upon the *Earth*, Chap. i. 15, 18. denoting, that under God, and in his Direction, his Creatures are all light, active, and perceptive, *Y.* 8.

14. The chief Animals thus personalized, and forming, and supporting the Seat of God, in this Capacity *rest not*, but incessantly, *Day and Night*, they celebrate his unspotted Holi-

Jesus Christ, taken IN to the GODHEAD, and made one with IT. I will transcribe his own Words. "Had not
" the Fables about Angels (invented by the same *Aben*
" *Ezra*, or his Accomplices, for the same wicked Pur-
" poses of effacing the Vestiges and Evidences of the
" three Persons of the Essence with the Man taken in, as
" *purposely* described in the *Cherubim*) blinded the Eyes of
" the faithful *Dr. Hammond*," &c. *Prelim. Disc. Note*,
p. 60. Again, " *The four living ones*—here and in the
" *Revelations*, set forth the three Persons of the Essence,
" with the *Man taken in*, and made one with it in the
" Person of *Christ*." *Ibid.* p. 62. Whether *Arians* and
Socinians can out brave the Force of this new invented Ar-
tillery, or not, I hope none will suspect the good Doctor
designed only to burlesque Revelation. I apprehend it
may appear tolerably plain, to a simple Christian, with a
cool Head, that the Purport of the Scene in Vision, is, to
represent the one supreme Cause of all Things; and that
the *Cherubim* are the Attendants of his Majesty, the Evi-
dences and Effects of his eternal creative Power. Their
Situation beneath and about the Throne, their different
Forms or Faces, as also their being called *Animals*, or *living*
Creatures, are proper Signs that they stand for such; and
their incessant Language, as well as the Homage they pay,
which leadeth to that solemn Worship of the Creator,
with which the first Act concludes, I humbly think, do
loudly speak them to be the Symbols of created Beings
only.

ness,

ness, universal Sovereignty, unlimited Power, and Existence thro' every conceivable Part of Duration, saying, *Holy, holy, holy* [o], *Lord God almighty, which was, and is, and is to come* [p], & 8.

15. Tho' these living Creatures thus perpetually speak forth the eternal Power and Godhead, yet have they, on particular occasions, some special Work assigned them in the prophetic *Drama*; namely, to be the *Leaders* of the highest Wor-

[o] The triple Salute and Acclamation of royal Personages, among the Ancients; as well as the Fervency of Devotion, which such Repetitions express; do well and easily account for the *thrice Holy*, without referring it to a remote mystical Sense of a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead. We are indeed informed, by an *ecclesiastical* Writer, that "*Ignatius*, the third Bishop of *Antioch* in *Syria*, " from the Apostle *Peter*, who also conversed with the Apostles themselves, saw a Vision of Angels praising the "*holy Trinity* by singing of *alternative Hymns*." Upon which the learned *Valesius* says, "I cannot imagine where "*Socrates* had this Story." *Vales. n. Socrat. B. vi. c. 8.* However that be, "*Proclus*, Bishop of *Constantinople*, was " taught the *Trisagium*, or Hymn to the Trinity, by " Angels." It began thus, "*Holy God, holy Almighty, holy Immortal*:" To which afterward, *Anastasius* the Emperor would have added, "*who hath been crucified for us*;" but it occasioned a Sedition: And in place thereof came this Clause, "*Holy Trinity, have Mercy upon us*." See *Valesius*' Note on *Evagrius*, l. iii. c. xlv. If *St. John*'s Vision had a *Defect*, it must be confessed, there have since been Dreams and pretended Revelations enough to well supply it.

[p] " This Expression signifies, that God is eternal, " by an Induction of all the Parts of Time, past, present, " and future. Thus the *Egyptians* expressed the Eternity " of their *Minerva*, or *Isis*; and thus also the *Greeks* did " describe the Eternity of their *Jupiter*." *Daubuz.*

ship

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ship and Adoration, paid to Almighty God, by the Saints. When they act this Part [q], which probably, they do *bowing* or *bending* their *Heads* [r], to give *Glory, and Honour, and Thanks* to the one self-existent God, represented by him *that sitteth on the Throne, who liveth for ever and ever; the Four and Twenty Elders*, representing the Church, immediately *fall down before him that sitteth upon the Throne, and*

[q] Their Part is not invariably fixed to *lead* the Worship. On other Occasions, where the Subject more nearly concerns the Church, as *Chap. xix. 4.* they *follow* the Elders in the Worship.

[r] *Prostration* could not be their Posture, who were *in the midst and about the Throne* to support it: For if they fell down, the Throne must sink also with them. Neither, perhaps, was it the Posture of the Elders, in their Worship, who are represented *sitting* before the Lord, on *Four and twenty Seats*. The Scene does not contain the Entrance of these venerable Personages into the sacred Presence, but exhibits them *seated*. That they arose again from their Seats, and fell down upon their Faces, or kissed the Ground in their Worship, seems not so natural. Besides, they had *every one of them Harps, and golden Vials full of Incense*, *Chap. v. 8.* and if a Decorum ought to be preserved in the Machinery, I humbly propose whether the Words, *to fall down*, should not be here understood with some Limitation, so as to signify the *bending* or *bowing* of the Body, or Head only. This, it is certain, was the Posture of the *Levites* in the House of the Lord, according to the Appointment of *David*, and the Commandment of the Lord by his Prophets: *They sang Praises with Gladness, and they bowed their Heads, and worshiped*, see *2 Chron. xxix. 27, 31.* However, if the Elders *prostrated* themselves, I perfectly agree here with *Dr. Hodges* (tho' perhaps not for the same Reasons) that the *four living Creatures* only bowed their Heads.

worship him who liveth for ever and ever ; and by their reverential Posture, do as it were, cast their Crowns before the Throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power ; for thou hast created [s] all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are, and were created, ¶ 9, 10, 11.

16. St. John having finished his Account of the Scene, and principal Characters in general, proceeds next to what was more special ; namely, he saw in the Right Hand of him that sat upon the Throne, representing the One Supreme God, a Book, or Roll of Prophecy, written within and on the Back or Outside, sealed with seven Seals [t], Chap. v. 1.

[s] The first Act of Worship is, an Hymn to the Creator, the Author and Governor of the Universe. From whence we may learn, that Natural Religion is the Foundation, and has the Lead of all instituted Worship. In Creation is God seen, and the Fire of Devotion is kindled there. *All thy Works shall praise thee, O Lord, and thy Saints shall bless thee, Psal. cxlv. 10.* Thus it is in this Vision of Heaven, where St. John was in the Spirit : And thus will it be wherever the Father is worshiped in Spirit and in Truth. “ The Study of Nature (saith a learned and ingenious Divine) “ is at once conducive to the Benefit of Man, and the Honour of God, and is the most “ effectual Preservative from all Superstition and false Religion ; and from what is still the more formidable Extremes, all Contempt of the true.” *Mr. Birch’s Sermon before the Royal College of Physicians, p. 21.*

[t] Some special and important Prophecies respecting desolating Judgments were ordered to be written in a Roll ; as *Isai. viii. 1. Jer. xxxvi. 2.* Several Pieces of Paper, or Parchment, sewed together, and rolled upon a Stick, make a Book according to the manner of those ancient Times.

17. And

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17. And relative to this, *St. John saw an Angel* of great Strength and Dignity, come forth into the Midst of the Theatre, and with a Voice loud enough to be heard even to the most distant Parts of the Creation, make the following Proclamation, *Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the Seals thereof?* ✕ 2.

18. Whereupon a profound Silence ensued. *No one in Heaven, nor in Earth, neither under the Earth, i. e. in all the Universe of Beings, was equal to the Design, was able to open the Book, neither to look thereon* [u], ✕ 3.

Hence it is said of the *Heavens*, when its Contents shall be no more seen by a People or City, *the Heavens shall be rolled together as a Scrole*, *Isai. xxxiv. 4. Rev. vi. 14.* The Roll of a Book written within and without, seems to be the Symbol of an *heavy Prophecy*. By having such an one spread before him, and being caused to eat it, *Ezekiel* was prepared to denounce God's Judgments against *Israel*, by *Siege, Famine, Sword, and Dispersion*, see *Chap. ii. iii. iv.* All learned Persons do not agree with the Punctuation of our Translators in this Place. *Mr. Lowman*, who herein follows *Grotius*, says, "this Book was *not* written on the "Backside." But if it was not, why is its Backside mentioned? Nobody would imagine the Seals to be within. If it be said, that "then some Writing must appear legible "to the Eye;" it is granted. However, the Book could not be read, properly, by any one until it was unsealed and opened. Besides, it is probable that *St. John* was caused to know, that the Book was *written within* by what he saw on the *Outside* thereof, which the *Inside* could not contain.

[u] To be *worthy*, and to be *able*, seem to import here one and the same thing, *Comp. verses 2, 3, 4.* To carry the Scheme of Providence into Execution, or to disclose the Secrets of Futurity, is above the utmost human Capacity. *No man was able to open, and to read the Book*, no nor even

19. St. *John*, who had his Expectations raised, and his Curiosity excited towards the Knowledge of future things, *Chap. iv. 1.* under the Appre-

to look thereon. By this last Expression twice repeated, I own I have suspected a *Difficulty* in the Construction of this wondrous Volume. I dare not say, the Book *cannot* be looked upon, since the Lamb has prevailed to open it, and to unloose the Seven Seals thereof: But, sure I am, few have as yet been able to look thereon, or to give any rational Account of this emblematic Device. It is about 120 Years since Mr. *Haydock* observed to Mr. *Mede*, the *cylindrical* Form of this Book. And if it was of that Formation, common to Books of those Times, it is probable it did not consist of seven Leaves, rolled side by side one within another; but was rather like one Skin of Parchment written on both Sides, and rolled on a Stick (see the preceding Note) the Seals fastning down the End that was outward. If this was its true Construction, the Book was not to be read, or looked upon, until it was opened by having all its Seals unloosed. Consequently (whether its Contents were written in *hieroglyphical Figures* with *Motto's*, as some have conjectured; or whether no Mystery at all belongs to its Contents, farther than that it was like *Ezekiel's*, the Symbol of an *heavy Prophecy*) what *John* saw, on the opening of each Seal, was not beheld by him *in the Book*. Probably, the Voice from the *first living Creature*, like as of *Thunder*, saying, *come and see*, is to be considered as the Introduction to a new Vision: And probably the Visions, consequent on the Seals, have no farther Connection with the *Book* than that they were caused, by the Power and Skill the *Lamb* successively exerted, in opening thereof. Wherever the *Things* that were *seen* in prophetic Visions, are *written*, should they not be well considered and attended to, as Helps to determine the Order, and explain the Sense of the *Things represented* by them? To what End else are they *written*? A Neglect of this, is, perhaps one Reason why the prophetic Books are so little understood. The right Notion of the particular Form and Construction of the

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hension of a Disappointment, *wept greatly* [x], *because*, as himself expresseth it, *no one was found worthy to open and to read the Book, neither to look thereon, &c.* 4.

20. Whereupon *one of the Elders*, observing his Grief, performed the friendly Office of an

Sealed Book, is a Point of Consequence, especially as Commentators on the *Revelation* begin here to build their respective Hypotheses. It may be too common, even to Writers of high Figure and Character, to take for granted what first should be proved; particularly with Regard to this Volume, "that it was a Seven-leaved Book;" or that "it consisted of seven Parts, which being opened "one after another" (they therefore suppose) "are designed to unfold the History of seven successive Periods "of Time." But what if this Volume was without such Parts, and was as it were one intire Piece, of the Roll-Form (which, as abovesaid, best agrees with the Form of the most ancient sacred Books.) Then may not the Visions which were immediately consequent on the opening of the Seals, be more properly considered as descriptive of the several remarkable Circumstances which conspired in one great Event? This I mention with Submission: And I humbly propose it to the Consideration of future Writers on the Apocalypse, whether they ought not to be somewhat curious in settling the Imagery thereof, as also strict in adhering thereto, in their Explanations.

[x] Those Persons, who think *St. John wept much* upon, not his own, but the *Account of the Church*, seem to suppose Inspiration, I know not how, supersedeth the Passions and Affections, the common Springs of Action, and maketh the Man another Sort of Being than he really is. The Reader will be pleased with *Mr. Locke's* Sentiments to this Purpose, as I find them more full and better expressed. "God, when he makes the Prophet, does not "unmake the Man. When he illuminates the Mind with "supernatural Light, he does not extinguish that which "is natural." *Of Human Understanding*, B. iv. c. xix.

Instructor to him, *saying, Weep not*; and directed him to two [y] ancient Prophecies, which foretold a Person, who was since come, with all the Qualifications requisite to so great a Work. *Behold*, saith he, *the Lion of the Tribe of Ju-*

[y] *The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David.* These, I humbly apprehend, are not Names or Titles of *Christ*, and cannot be applied to him but by way of *Enigma*. He is no where else, that I know of, in Scripture, called a *Lion*. If he be so called here, *Behold the Lion*, lo, a *Lamb* appears: A very contrary Character! Neither can he be called, with any Propriety in our Language, *the Root of David*, without calling him the Reverse of what he is, that is, the *Branch*. Be all Contradiction and Repugnancy of Notion far from Divine Revelation. We have here the *manner* of citing and applying two ancient Prophecies to *Jesus Christ*, by intitling them after the chief Image or Notion expressed in them. A *Manner* well known to the *Jews*, the particular Titles of whose most sacred Books, as well as the Divisions of them, are taken from the principal Matters treated of, or Persons, or Things mentioned therein. *Behold the Lion of the Tribe of Judah.* A plain Reference this to *Jacob's* famous Prophecy touching that *Tribe*, *Gen. xlix. 9, 10.* *Judah is a Lion's Whelp; from the Prey, my Son, thou art gone up: He stooped down, he couched as a Lion, and as an old Lion; who shall rouse him up? The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the People be.* The *Root of David* is also a like Reference to the Prophecy of *Isaiah, Chap. xi. 1.* *And there shall come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his Roots. And Verse 10. And in that Day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the People; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest shall be glorious.* The plain Truth seems to be this, *David* and his Family are considered, after the prophetic Manner, as a *royal genealogical Tree*, whence a notable Branch was to grow. Whenever therefore we meet with or are referred to a

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dab, Gen. xlix. 10. *The Root of David*, Isai. xi. 1, 10. *He* to whom these Predictions belong, of *Judah's Tribe*, and *David's Family*, *both prevailed to open the Book*, and to loose the seven Seals thereof, *ŷ 5.*

21. Upon receiving this agreeable Intimation, *St. John beheld*, and lo, a new Character appeared; *in the midst of the Throne*, and of the *four Beasts*, and *in the midst of the Elders* (they all continuing in the same Position and Order, as before described) *stood a Lamb*, with Marks of Violence, *as it had been slain*; but different from all Animals of that Species [z], *having seven Horns*, and *seven Eyes*, *ŷ 6.*

22. This was plainly an hieroglyphic, or sacred Character: The seven Horns and seven Eyes were Joint Symbols, expressive of the same Attributes or Subjects, to wit, *the seven Spirits [a] of God sent forth into all the Earth*,

Prophecy under this Similitude, whether it be termed the *Root*, or *Stem*, or *Rod*, or *Branch of David*, or of *Jesse*, their Son, the Lord *Messiah*, is, I believe, always intended. He is the chief, the anointed one, that was to issue from, and concerning whom so much is predicted of *the Root and Offspring of David*.

[z] See the *Fourth Dissertation*.

[a] *The seven Spirits of God are expressed by different Symbols in the same Vision*. Before the Throne, N^o 9, they are represented by seven Lamps of Fire burning. Here, with the Emblem of *Jesus Christ by seven Horns and seven Eyes*. Let none object, as if this was contrived to puzzle and mislead the Reader; since these different Symbols have a Fitness and Congruity in both Places, and Notice is fairly given at each, that the Notion is the same; so that he cannot be imposed on, but thro' his own Inattention. See also the *Note (i)* under No. 9. These
which

which are mentioned under the Notion of *Eyes*, by one Prophet, *Zach. iii. 9. iv. 10.* and foretold by another, to rest upon the Person of the *Messias*, *Isai. xi. 2.* which shews that the *Lamb* in Vision, is the representative Character of *Jesus Christ*, who hath all the Qualifications of the seven-fold Graces or Gifts of the Spirit of God, to unveil his Secrets, and execute his Purposes in the Church and World.

23. The *Lamb* thus introduced and described on the Throne, in the midst of the Theatre, now began to act his part. *He came [b] near and*

Horns and Eyes, on the Head of the *Lamb*, are natural and easy Representations of what the *Jews*, from *Isaiah xi. 2.* saith *Lightfoot*, speak much of, viz. the seven Spirits of *Messiah*. The *Septuagint* there reckon up seven Gifts of the Spirit, answerable to the seven Spirits of God, mentioned *Zach. iii. 9* *Lowth in loc.* Every Gift is, by an high Figure personalized, as, *e. g. the Spirit of Wisdom, the Spirit of Knowledge, &c.* I mention this, not only to restore the true Notion of the seven Spirits, but the rather to shew that the Application of those Terms, with their Symbols, to *seven Arch-Angels*, tho' it has the Sanction of so great a Name as *Mr. Joseph Mede*, is forced and unnatural. What, it seems, led him and others to it was, taking the Holy Ghost for strictly a *Person*, the third in the Trinity, they thought it "very hard and harsh to make him the Horns and Eyes of *Christ*, as he is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the World, that is, as he is Man," viz. *Mede's Works*, B. 1. *Dis. 10.* Thus prolific is *Error*, one wrong Conceit begetteth another; nor is the wisest Man able to render it otherwise.

[b] The Eastern Thrones were large enough to admit several Persons at once; see *Observations on the First Vision*, p. 60. This royal Seat, whereon the *Lamb* acteth his Part, is the Throne of God, the Father of our Lord
took

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took the Book out of the Right Hand of him [c] that sat upon the Throne, & 7.

24. *And when he had taken the Book, as a Person dignified with a special Commission and Authority from God, the Supreme Governor and Judge [d] of all, it is highly probable, from No. 15. the Four Beasts, the hieroglyphical Characters of the Creatures of Life, which were round about the Throne, bowed their Heads, in Token of Subjection, and gave Glory [e].*

Jesus Christ, Rev. iii. 21. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, as I also overcame and am sat down with my Father in his Throne.

[c] It is almost an Affront to the common Sense of Readers to observe, that two distinct personal Characters are represented on this Throne, *God*, and the *Lamb*. Yet, as if it were on purpose to prove one sad Truth, that no Revelation is so plain but Men may pervert it, the learned Dr. *Hodges* maketh *both* to belong only to one Person. *Elibu* p. 41. "The second Person is illustriously distinguished in both his Natures upon the Mercy-Seat by a "particular Representation." So (if I do not misapprehend him) the Human Nature of one Person came and took the Book out of the Right Hand of the Divine Nature of the same Person. This is the good Doctor's particular Representation of the *King Messiah, Him that sat on the Throne*: Astonishing!

[d] Among the *Hebrews*, the Seat of Judgment, and Throne of Government, are one and the same. *Daubuz.*

[e] Here is, I humbly apprehend, an *Ellipsis*, which ought to be supplied from a preceding Observation made by St. *John* himself, touching these *living Creatures*; namely, *when those Beasts give Glory, and Honour, and Thanks—Then the Four and twenty Elders fall down, Chap. iv. 9, 10.* The Dominion of the first *Adam* was but a Shadow, when compared with the Dominion of *Christ, who hath all Things put under him, all Sheep and Oxen, yea and*

25. *The Four and twenty Elders*, immediately thereon, who sat around on Four and twenty Seats, *fell down*, and bowed themselves in humble Worship *before the Lamb*; acknowledging his Excellence and Dignity, and their own Obligations to him, *having every one of them Harps and golden Vials*, or Cups full of Odours [f], or Incense, *which are Symbols of the Prayers and Praises of the Saints*, & 8.

26. *And*, on this grand Occasion, and new State of Things, *they sung a new prophetical Song*, to wit, of Deliverance obtained by the Lamb, *saying, Thou art worthy to take the Book, and to open the Seals thereof: For thou wast slain* [g], *and hast redeemed us*, some

the Beasts of the Field, Psal. viii. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 27. But it would be as absurd to suppose the *Beasts*, here, joining the Elders in the Expressions of this Song, as it is to suppose that they also *had Harps and golden Vials*; or that they also who were *in the midst of the Throne*, and round about the Throne, as its Supporters, *fell down before it*, if Prostration were the Posture in the Elders Worship. If we do not attend to, and preserve the Order and Decorum of the several Parts and Characters, we shall necessarily take in a very faulty imperfect Account of the most glorious Vision that was ever exhibited to Mortals.

[f] In the *Jewish* Worship at the Temple, the Time of Incense was the Time of Prayer, see *Luke* i. 10. The Christian Church on Earth being here represented (see below n. [k]) there is evidently no ground for that superstitious Conceit, that the Saints above offer up our Prayers to God, and are therefore to be invoked by us.

[g] The Authority and Jurisdiction of *Christ* is founded in *Death*. *Therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow, of Things in Heaven and Things on Earth, and Things under the Earth: And*
from

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from the Burden and Curse of the Law, others from our vain Conversation and Idol-Worship, *to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation* [b]; and *hast made us unto our God* [i], what we appear in Dignity to be, *Kings and Priests*; and as such unto him *we shall reign on the Earth* [k] a royal Priesthood, *Ÿ 9, 10.*

that every Tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. A Passage finely illustrated in this Vision.

[b] *Out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation.* Hence it appears, that tho' these Characters of Twenty-four Elders in the Vision are taken from the *Jewish Church*, they are properly symbolical only, and descriptive of the *Christian Church*, including both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The former were redeemed from the Burthen and Curse of the Law, *Gal. iii. 13.* The latter from their vain Conversation and idolatrous Worship, *1 Peter i. 18.*

[i] *Hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests*: Not unto the World, but unto God only. In his Account and Estimation they are sacred Persons, bearing a filial Relation to him, and having Access into his Presence: for so much these Terms of Power and Dignity import.

[k] This must be understood of the *Christian Church* in this World, represented by these Elders, *we shall reign on the Earth.* They who interpreting the Words literally, of I know not what *Dominion*, call it *civil* or *ecclesiastical*, do grossly mistake the prophetic Language. This over-set the *Jews*. They explained the Prophecies of the Kingdom of the *Messias*, in a literal Sense; and expected it to consist in temporal Grandeur and Rule over all the Nations of the Earth. Hence they rejected *Jesus of Nazareth*, and God rejected them. Happy had *Christians* been had they never imbibed the like Notion, and followed the same manner of interpreting this and other apocalyptic Expressions. But we must excuse the Weakness

27. St. *John* beheld a vast Accession of Objects on this happy Occasion, and he heard the Voice of them, to wit, many *Angels round about the Throne, and the Beasts, and the Elders*, wide incircling them: and the Number of them was *Ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*, an innumerable Company! saying with a loud Voice, by way of Response to the Church, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing; i. e. all Attributes and Perfections, implied in the sevenfold Graces and Gifts of the Spirit*, is he worthy of, in order to disclose and execute the Purposes of God, *ŷ 11, 12.*

28. And the whole Universe of Beings caught the sacred Flame, and formed a grand Chorus to the Song. *Every Creature which is in Heaven, and on the Earth, and under the Earth, and such as are in the Sea, and all that are in them, St. John heard, in full Symphony*

of those Persons who have been fond of this Sense of the *Reign of the Saints upon Earth*, since the Apostles themselves made a favourite Point of it, before they were thoroughly initiated in the great Mystery of Godliness. To fear God, to controul the animal Passions, to act a brave, a just, a generous Part, on all proper Occasions, or, in a word, to reign in *Righteousness*, seems to be that wherein the Power and Dignity consists, of which the Elders gloried. Any other Reign of *Christians* upon Earth “ agrees “ not with the Genius of *Christian Faith*, or with the “ Nature of *Christian Promises*, or with that Frame and “ Temper of Spirit [which] it requires from the Professors of *Christianity*.” vid. *Whitby of the true Millennium*, p. 741.

26 Observations on the second Vision.

and Concert, saying, *Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever, &c* 13.

29. *And the four Beasts, who began, concluded the Worship, and said, Amen [l]. And the Four and Twenty Elders fell down, and, probably in profound mental Adoration, worshiped him that liveth for ever and ever [m], &c* 14.

[l] “ Thus (saith Mr. Pyle) was represented the pure “ and primitive Worship of the *Christian Church*, to be “ performed toward God and *Jesus Christ*, thro’ all its “ Periods of Time upon Earth.” To which, I add, when God shall put it into the Hearts of *Christians* to review and reform their *Liturgies* (and already it must be acknowledged many of the Reverend the Clergy begin to breathe that good Spirit) here is a Model or Pattern worthy of their Regard.

[m] I find myself at a Loss which to admire most in this divine Composition, the amazing Grandeur and Magnificence of the Imagery, or the Notions, truly sublime and delicate, that are expressed throughout. If a warm *Fancy* tinctured with *Ignorance, Superstition, and Melancholy*, can produce the like; it must be acknowledged those Principles have not well operated for near *Seventeen hundred Years*.

DISSERTATION I.

*Concerning the AUTHORITY of the
REVELATION.*

AS the Parts which compose the *New Testament* were written at different times, and in Places remote from each other, no Wonder some Books should at first be called in question, or that some Time should pass before a Canon of Scripture was established by the general Consent of Christians. The Wonder is, where Books that have been generally received by Christians, for the first two or three Centuries as *genuine* Works, are after disowned and rejected as *spurious*. The former may be expected to arise from the natural Circumstances of things, and the Care and Caution of Christians not to be imposed on : But the latter is extraordinary, and imports or requires some new Evidence and Discovery unknown to the Ancients.

This last was pretty much the Case with the Revelation. For notwithstanding its high Antiquity, and early and general Reception, it became controverted on both Sides among many, in *Eusebius's* Time, who the Author of it was : Whether *John* the Apostle and Evangelist, or

some other *John*; or whether it was not the Work of an Heretical Person.

Caius, generally supposed to have been a Presbyter of the Church of *Rome* about the Beginning of the third Century, was the first Catholic Writer we are acquainted with, who, not knowing what to make of the Book, and thinking it to bear some Resemblance to the new Prophecy of *Montanus*, which *Proclus*, whom he wrote against, defended, with great Rashness ascribed it to CERINTHUS.

In order to collect together what Light we can on this Subject, we may observe, that about seventy Years, more or less, after the Death of *St. John*, arose *Montanus*, with his two Prophetesses *Priscilla* and *Maximilla*, pretending to have succeeded in the Gift of Prophecy *Quadratus* and *Amias* in *Philadelphia*. As they affected much to be *in the Spirit*, to foretell Wars and Commotions, and pronounced them *Blessed*, who delighted in the extravagant, foolish and strange Expressions which they uttered in *Extasy* [a]; it is probable, that in their new Writings, or *Scriptures*, which they composed, they imitated [b] the *Revelation of John*. And as a farther Evidence that they had this Book

[a] *Eusebius*, E. H. B. v. C. 16, 17, 18.

[b] Many Passages in the *Sibylline Oracles* seem also to be copied from the *Revelation*: Whence some Critics suspect that *Montanists* were the Authors of those *Verses*. Whose Fraud soever it was, it shews the Genuineness of the *Revelation*. Indeed to interpret the *Revelation* by those silly Writings, as if they came by the Inspiration of the same Spirit (as Sir *John Floyer* tells us he, before

before them, and built on its Authority, it seems they set themselves up for the *Virgin Company*, *they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*; and accounted themselves *the First-Fruits unto God, and to the Lamb*, and Citizens of that *new Jerusalem*, which they said was actually descended from God out of Heaven [c], into *Pepuza*, the Place of their Residence in *Phrygia*. Wherefore how far *Caius* might have been tempted to disparage a Work which the *Montanists* had made so ill an Use of—deserves Consideration. Prejudices have their Influence upon even great Persons when pressed in Argument. This really seems to have been the Case with *Caius*, in ascribing this Work unto *Cerinthus*.

Whether *Caius* was soon followed therein, by Persons of Note and Eminence, is a Question. However, this Opinion concerning its being an *Imposture* and *Forgery*, I find taken up and favoured by a late Writer [d], upon no better Foundation, as far as I am able to perceive, than that it was first started by that venerable and eloquent Man: For tho' this Writer talks of *several ancient Authors, who lived before the*

and some of the Fathers of the Church have done) is one way to disgrace the Book, and prejudice every nice Reader against it.

[c] *Rev.* xiv. 4. xxi. 2. *Hist. of Mont.* Ar. ii. Sec. 10. Ar. iv. Sec. 5.

[d] *A Discourse Historical and Critical on the Revelation ascribed to St. John.* The Original was written in *French*, but never printed, tho' an *English* Translation of it was published in 1730.

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Age of Dionysius of Alexandria, Divines, who were all Greeks [e], who rejected the Revelation as a mere Rhapsody: He is not able to name one. Neither is it probable that Dionysius himself could produce any besides Caius: For on so unpopular a Subject as is his Critique on the Revelation, it may be presumed he would have done it had he been able. And the plain Reason why he does not mention Caius by Name, seems to be in order to take the better Occasion to magnify his Authorities, and speak of them in the plural Number, as we shall see by and by. A Practice, this Writer well knows, too common in all Ages, and what himself has mentioned from Mr. Basnage elsewhere [f].

This being so, it is great Pity we have not all the Reasons which *Caius* assigned for degrading this Work. These ought always to be mentioned whenever his Authority is urged. It is probable indeed that *Eusebius*, who expressly mentions *Caius* by Name, and to whom the Book was also *doubtful*, would not omit any that were material of them. What therefore he has quoted from *Caius* in his *Ecclesiastical History*, I will here transcribe: “ But *Cerintus*
 “ also, who by Revelations written by himself,
 “ as it were by some great Apostle, hath feigned
 “ monstrous Narrations, as if they had been
 “ shewed him by Angels, and sets them abroad
 “ amongst us, saying, that after the Resurre-
 “ ction, the Kingdom of *Christ* will be terre-

[e] Ibid. p. 30, 33.

[f] Page 94.

“ strial,

“ strial, and that Men living again in the Flesh
 “ at *Jerusalem* shall be subject to Desires and
 “ Pleasures. He also being an Enemy to di-
 “ vine Scripture, and desirous to induce Men
 “ into Error, says, that there shall be the Num-
 “ ber of a Thousand Years spent in a nuptial
 “ Feast.” [g]

That *Cerintus* did compile a Work which he intitled *Revelations*, and to which he prefixed the Name of some great Apostle, may, for aught I know, be true; since many Forgeries of this kind appeared early; and an *Arch-Heretick*, as he is styled, who set himself up even to vie with the Apostles, might be as likely as any to counterfeit their Writings, in order to spread his own Notions.

But was it *the Revelation of John* that *Caius* imputed to *Cerintus*? As the *Narrations* which it contains are not more *monstrous* or strange than those in *Ezekiel*, *Daniel*, and some other prophetical Books [b], where Angels generally order, signify, or interpret the Scene; and no such things are taught therein, as that “ after
 “ the Resurrection the Kingdom of *Christ* will
 “ be terrestrial, and that Men living again in
 “ the Flesh at *Jerusalem* shall be subject to De-
 “ sires and Pleasures: And also that there shall
 “ be the Number of a thousand Years spent in a
 “ nuptial Feast:”—I say, as these things are not taught therein (for *the Kingdoms of this World becoming the Kingdoms of our Lord and of his*

[g] *Euseb.* E. H. B. iii. C. 28.
Dissertation.

[b] See the *Third*
Christ ;

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Christ; and the *Life and Reign of the Souls of the Martyrs for a thousand Years*, are Points very different :) One would indeed be apt to make it a necessary and proper Question, whether *Caius* did not mean and intend some other Book ?

But the Truth is, *Eusebius* understood him otherwise. And *Dionysius*, Bishop of *Alexandria*, hath, I think, in the Beginning of his Critique concerning the *Revelation of John*, put it beyond Doubt, that this was the Book which *Caius* intended.

“ Indeed (says *Dionysius*) some of our An-
 “ cestors disowned and wholly rejected this
 “ Book ; confuting every Chapter, and demon-
 “ strating it to be an unknown and senseless
 “ Work, and that the Title is forged ; for
 “ they say it is not *John's* : Neither is it a Re-
 “ velation, because it is covered over with so
 “ thick and dark a Veil of Nonsense ; and that
 “ not only no Apostle, but also no holy or ec-
 “ clestiaſtical Person could have been the Com-
 “ piler of this Work : But that it was *Cerin-*
 “ *thus*, the Founder of the Heresy, called from
 “ him the *Cerinthian* Heresy, who was desir-
 “ ous to have a creditable Name prefixed to
 “ his Forgery : For this, they say, was *Cerin-*
 “ *thus's* Opinion and Doctrine ; that *Christ's*
 “ Kingdom should be terrestrial : And what-
 “ soever he, being a carnal and voluptuous Man,
 “ most lusted after, in these he dreamed the
 “ Kingdom of *Christ* consisted ; as in indulg-
 “ ing the Belly, and the Parts beneath the
 “ Belly,

“ Belly ; I mean in Eating, Drinking, and Wo-
 “ men ; and also in Festivals, Sacrifices, and
 “ killing of Victims, by which these might with
 “ more specious Pretences be acquired.” [i]

From the manner in which *Eusebius* hath
 cited the Testimonies of these two Writers,
 concerning *Cerintus*, and from the Sameness
 of Sentiment in his Quotation from *Dionysius*,
 concerning the *Revelation of John*, with that
 before taken from *Caius*, it is pretty evident (1),
 that it was this Book, and not any other Re-
 velation of *John*, that *Caius* disowned and
 wholly rejected, saying, that it was *Cerintus's*.
 (2) That *Caius* was the Person whom *Diony-*
sius principally meant by *some of our Ancestors*,
 who had written a large Critique upon it. (3)
 We may observe the Substance of this Critique ;
 it imported, that the *Revelation* was an *un-*
known and *senseless Work*. In this last Article,
Dionysius himself seems to concur, tho', to save
 Appearances, he expresseth himself with a good
 deal of Art. “ I dare not indeed (saith he) re-
 “ ject this book, since many of the Brethren
 “ have it in great Esteem. But this is the O-
 “ pinion I have of it, I think the Sense or Sub-
 “ ject thereof surpasseth my Apprehension, and
 “ that there is a mysterious and admirable
 “ meaning covertly contained in every Part of
 “ it : For tho' I do not understand it, yet I
 “ suppose there is a more profound meaning
 “ comprehended in the Words. I do not judge

[i] *Euseb. E. H. B. vii. C. 25.*

“ of, nor fathom these things by the Line of
 “ my own Reason; but attributing much more
 “ to Faith, I esteem them more sublime
 “ than to be comprehended by me. I do not
 “ condemn those things I do not understand,
 “ but I the rather admire them, because I can-
 “ not see thro’ them” [k]. This was the Bi-
 shop of *Alexandria*!

And indeed he was reported by some to have said the same thing with *Caius*, that *the Book of the Revelation was made by the Arch-Heretic Cerinthus, who published it under the Name of John the Apostle, that he might get the greater Authority for his own Opinions* [l]. But whatsoever ground there was for this Report, we have seen above that *Dionysius* was willing to pass for a Man of greater Faith.

But to attend to *Caius*, or in the plural Number to those *Ancestors* of *Dionysius*, who, it seems, had shewn *the Revelation of JOHN* to be *throughout unintelligible and inconsistent*. It is pity we have not the whole Critique preserved, in which every individual Chapter was refuted. However, let us briefly examine what *Dionysius* hath given us. They held the Work to be a *Forgery*. But their bare saying, *that it is not John’s*, is no manner of Proof at all. What they farther said, “ that it is not a Re-
 “ velation, because it is covered over with so
 “ thick and dark a Veil of Nonsense; and that
 “ not only no Apostle, but also no holy or eccle-

[k] Ibid.

[l] *Vales.* Note on *Euseb.* B. iii. C. 28.“ *fiastical*

“ fiftical Person could have been the Compiler of this Work :”—it must be confessed is pushing the matter home, and for ever precluding *John* from owning thereof. How fair this is, let the Reader judge. *Cerintus*, that Arch-Heretic, was the Compiler, who prefixed the Name of *John* thereto, to gain a more favourable Reception to his own Opinion and Doctrine.

If *Cerintus* was the Author, it is my humble Opinion he could not have done himself more Honour than to have set his own Name to it : Nor could those ancient Critics have well set him in a more respectable Light than by ascribing this Work unto him. But be that as it may, it seems his own Opinion and Doctrine was what he chiefly sought to recommend. Thus *self-denying* was this *Enemy of Truth* !

Be it so then, that *Cerintus* was in Opinion and Doctrine a *Millenarian*, and in his Morals a carnal and voluptuous Man. Be the Consequence also this, that his Dreams suited his Lusts, or that he framed a chimerical System, agreeable to his vicious Inclinations : Here is a Work said to be *forged* by him. But why ? Has it such internal Characters as exactly agree with and discover his depraved Notions ? Let us then come to the Point. *Where* does the Revelation represent the Kingdom of *Christ* as consisting in indulging the Belly, and the Parts beneath the Belly ? *Where* does it hold forth those sensual Gratifications of *Eating, Drinking, and Women* ? *Where* does it speak of *Festivals*, that may with a Shew of Piety, serve to promote his lewd O-

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pinions? *Where of Sacrifices and killing of Victims?*

It is true: We find a Promise *to eat of the Tree of Life*, and also *to take of the Waters of Life*. But this is no more than the usual Language of Prophecy. We also read of *the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. But did not *Christ* himself compare the Gospel of the Kingdom to a *Supper*, and himself to a *Bridegroom*? And does not *St. Paul* speak in an *Allegory* of the Union of *Christ* and his Church? As there is nothing more said of *Festivals*, and *marrying* in the whole Book, no Images or unchaste Notions that may offend the purest Mind; nothing at all of *Sacrifices*, and *killing of Victims*:—What must we say of those Critics? The most favourable thing that we can say is, they were too hasty in rejecting this Book, and far too rash in disparaging it by ascribing it to a Person of such an odious Character.

Here then, I think, from the Arguments which themselves have urged, we may be sure that *Cerintbus* was not the Author of it. For after all his monstrous Narrations and Stories of Angels, his Doctrines and Dreams, there is no Probability, nor Shew of Evidence, that the *Revelation* was written by him [1]. Besides *Cerintbus*, on whom this Forgery is charged,

[1] How the *Revelation* expressly contradicts some of *Cerintbus's* favourite Opinions, as, *that the World was not made by God: And that Jesus was a different Person from Christ*: And that “it is therefore improbable to the

was contemporary with, and is said by many to have died before St. *John*. It was easy to him therefore to have disowned a Work, and prevented its Reception in *Asia*, thus counterfeited and published with the Sanction of his own and that of his Master's Name. And can we think he would not have done it? This would have been much more memorable, and of greater Consequence than *Irenæus's* Story, which is an extremely improbable one, and of very suspected Authority, that *John* shunned the Company of *Cerinthus*, and persuaded those that were with him to leave the *Bath* where he was. According to *Tertullian* and others, St. *John* actually exerted himself in the Affair of an Imposture, where he was much less interested, I mean in degrading the Priest in *Asia*, who composed the *Acts of Paul and Thecla*.

But before we dismiss this Article, it may not be amiss to desire the Reader, once for all, to take Notice of the particular Nature and Contents of the Work here said to have been forged. Whether we regard it either as to *Matter* or *Manner*, it is certainly not the Composition of a low and ordinary Genius. For as all its Instructions are expressed by *Symbols* and *Hieroglyphics*, it must have required a great deal of Application, Skill, and Judgment

“ highest Degree, that *Cerinthus* should write the *Revelation* under the Name of *John* ; ” is justly observed by Dr. *Lardner*, in his useful Work of *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, vol. iv. p. 687, 688.

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to collect the Materials together, and to adapt to each Notion a proper Image. There is also a prodigious Delicacy and Accuracy displayed in the Form and Support of the infinitely various Characters that are therein introduced. And the whole Work discovers an high Degree of Knowledge of the Power and Perfections of God, and also of the Scriptures of the Prophets, which are almost all alluded to, or are illustrated throughout this Work.

Now it is very different with Writings that are merely *epistolary* and familiar; as well as with those that are historical. Those may be forged with more Ease, in as much as a Person may recur to Examples, traditional Reports, and the Narrations of others for Assistance.

Besides, however usual it might be for Forgers to assume the Character of a divinely inspired Person, or Apostle, yet very few had the Assurance (tho' some had) to assume that of *Jesus Christ*, as this Writer does, making use of his Name and Authority to the Title and subject Matter of the Book—*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, &c.* And the Manner in which it is certified is solemn, and calls for the utmost Attention: Not only *I John*, but *I Jesus testify these things*.

Wherefore if this Work be a *Counterfeit* and *Forgery*, the Reader will please to observe, that it must be a very peculiar and extraordinary one.

And

And what End is it adapted to serve? No turn of worldly Power, or particular Point of Doctrine, or ecclesiastical Discipline (as was the case with some later Visions) but mere inconsistent Vanity. Whilst it recommends Holiness, Truth, and Purity, the *Deceiver* and *false Prophet*, and WHOSOEVER LOVETH AND MAKETH A LYE, are remarkably threatened and exposed, as the most odious Characters in the whole Book.

It is true, there have been notorious Frauds and Forgeries among Christians under one Pretence or other; and the *Apostolical Constitutions* are a remarkable Instance thereof. But if this be a counterfeit Work, it must, I think, be allowed to far surpass every thing of the kind, and to be the most laboured Forgery in the prophetic Manner that ever appeared. But this by the Bye.

Whilst *Cerintbus* is supposed by some to have compiled a sort of Apocalypse of his own, upon the Model of St. *John's*; he is thought by others to have interpolated the Revelation of that Apostle, and accommodated it to his own private Sentiments. The latter, they judge not unlikely, because of the bold Additions made by those of his Party, and others, to the Gospel of *Christ* [m]; and the Liberty taken with the Writings of the Apostles in their own Time; which seem to have moved *Paul* to authenticate his Epistles with his own [n] Hand;

[m] *Gal.* i. 6—10.

[n] 2 *Theff.* ii. 2. iii. 17.
and

and St. *John*, to guard his Revelation, as if he foresaw such an Attempt would be made, with a severe threatening on *any Man who should add to the things, or take away from the Words* [o] thereof. Now if this was the real Truth of the Case, and that a Copy of this Book fell into *Cerintbus's* Hands, and was interpolated by him (as it is said was indeed the Fate of a Copy of St. *Matthew's* Gospel, known by his Name as well as that of the *Gospel of the Ebionites and Nazarenes*) [p] I do not perceive any Reason to suspect that the Copy we have, however it may have suffered in common with other Copies of the Sacred Books, by the Carelessness or Ignorance of Transcribers, hath been mutilated and corrupted by him. For, with all its Obscurity, it is throughout plain and express against what we know were his Sentiments.

There is still extant, tho' not made public, a spurious Revelation under the Title of this Apostle. It is kept in the Archives of the *Imperial Library at Vienna*. " I could wish (adds " my Author) this Apocryphal Revelation were " brought forth to light, that it might be com- " pared with the canonical one, and that a " Judgment might be made upon it: Not " doubting but that whether it be the old one " of *Cerintbus*, or a later one of some of his " Disciples, or even but the Work of one of the " *Montanist Sibyls*, the Publication thereof " may yet be worth the while for the clearing

[o] Rev. xxii. 18, 19,
Vol. i. p. 221, 223.

[p] *Jones* of the Canon,

“ up of some Particulars, both in this Book of
 “ *Esdra*s, and in St. *John's Revelation*, which
 “ in several Places run parallel together” [q].
 Whether this be the very Apocalypse of *Ce-*
rintbus, which he is said to have named and
 calculated for the Judaizing Christians who fol-
 lowed him, we must leave to the Discovery of
 Time.

There are Persons of good Learning and Cha-
 racter, who, tho' they esteem the *Revelation* as an
 holy and pious Work, have thought some other
John was the *Author* of it, and not *John* the
 Apostle. Now, that there was or might be
 more Persons of the same Name at once in
Asia, is very possible. We read of *John*, sur-
 named *Mark*, Nephew to *Barnabas*; and that
 he was sometime at *Ephesus* with *Timothy* may
 not be disputed; *Acts* xv. 37. 2 *Tim.* iv. 11.
 That he was ordained by *John* the *Evangelist*,
 Bishop of the *Jewish Christians* at *Ephesus*, as
Timothy was ordained by *Paul*, Bishop of the
Gentile Christians in that City, seems a mere
 Conjecture, void of all Proof. This *John* is
 reckoned by many to be the same with *Mark*,
 who wrote the Gospel: And some have appre-
 hended a great Resemblance in Words, Phrases,
 and manner of Writing, between *Mark's* Gos-
 pel and this Book. The ascribing it to this *E-*
vangelist is certainly far from degrading it. But
 then, if *John Mark* was the same with the *E-*
vangelist, he was, according to *Eusebius*, the

[q] Dr. Lee's *Dissert. on the Second Book of Esdras*;
 p. 55.

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first Bishop of *Alexandria*, where he is also said to have suffered Martyrdom [r]. This does not agree with that other *John*, who is said to reside in *Asia*, nor with the Story of the *two Tombs* at *Ephesus*. Neither does it at all agree with *Papias's* [s] Account of this *John the Elder*, from whom, he says, he had the following Testimony ; “ That *Mark* being the Interpreter of *Peter*, accurately wrote whatever he remembred, &c.” This surely was not the Presbyter’s Testimony of himself. He rather would have said, “ I [*John Mark*] being the “ Interpreter of *Peter*, &c.” And if *John Mark* was, as others more probably think, a different Person, and not to be confounded with *Mark* the *Evangelist* ; that he left *Rome* after the Death of *Paul*, and went and resided again in *Asia* does not appear. Suppose it were so, and let us also suppose for once, that he wrote the *Revelation* ; as the Disciples and Evangelists were often, and indeed chiefly known by their Surnames, it is strange we should never in all Antiquity once read of *the Revelation of Mark*. Whether there be any thing in that Observation or not, “ the Writer calling himself *John* without any very particular Characteristics, gives “ Ground to conclude, he is the principal Person of that Name then living. And it may “ be judged very unlikely, that the Spirit of “ God should admonish and reprove the Seven “ Churches of *Asia* by *John the Elder* ; (allow-

[r] *Euseb.* E. H. B. ii. c. 24. *Calmet*, art. MAR.[s] *Ibid.* E. H. B. iii. c. 39.

“ ing that there was such a Person) whilst
 “ *John* the Apostle was living, and presided in
 “ those Parts” [t].

Eusebius, it is plain, seems to have thought, that if *John* the Apostle and Evangelist was not, then *John* the Elder, whoever he was, was the Author of this Book : For thus he quotes some of *Papias's* Words, which here follow—“ Now
 “ if at any time I met with any one that had
 “ conversed with the Elders, I made a diligent
 “ Enquiry after their Sayings, what *Andrew*
 “ or what *Peter* said ; or what *Philip*, or *Thomas*, or *James*, or *John*, or *Matthew*, or
 “ any other of the Lord's Disciples were wont
 “ to say ; and what *Aristion*, and *John* the
 “ Elder (the Disciples of our Lord) uttered.
 “ For I thought that those Things contained
 “ in Books could not profit me so much as
 “ what I heard from the Mouths of Men
 “ yet surviving.” — And then *Eusebius* adds,
 “ In which Words it is very observable that he
 “ recounts the Name of *John* twice ; the former
 “ of whom he reckons among *Peter*,
 “ *James*, *Matthew*, and the rest of the Apostles ;
 “ manifestly shewing thereby that he speaks of
 “ *John* the Evangelist : But, making a Distinction
 “ in his Words, he places the other *John*
 “ with those who are not of the Number of the
 “ Apostles ; putting *Aristion* before him ; and expressly
 “ calls him *the Elder*. So that hereby
 “ is shown the Truth of their Relation, who

[t] Dr. *Lardner* Credib. vol. iv. p. 729.

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“ have said that there were two in *Asia* who
 “ had that same Name; and that there are
 “ two Sepulchres at *Ephesus*, and each of them
 “ now called the Sepulchre of *John*. Now
 “ I judged it very requisite to make this Ob-
 “ servation: For it is likely that the second
 “ (unless any one would rather have it to be the
 “ first) saw that Revelation which goes under
 “ the Name of *John*. Further, this *Papias*,
 “ whom we speak of, professes he received the
 “ Sayings of the Apostles from those who had
 “ been conversant with them; and was, as he
 “ says, the Hearer of *Aristion* and *John* the
 “ Elder” [u].

Allowing here the Truth of *Eusebius's* Ob-
 servation, that *Papias* speaks of another *John*
 besides *John* the Apostle and Evangelist, whom
 he calls *the Elder*: This second *John* could
 not, I think, be contemporary, but must have
 lived later than the other. *Papias* made dili-
 gent Enquiry (he says) after what *Andrew* and
Peter, *Philip* and *Thomas*, *James* and *John*,
Matthew, and the other of the Lord's Disci-
 ples were wont to say: But as to *Aristion* and
John the Elder, he heard what they uttered,
 as from the Mouths of Men yet surviving. The
 Apocalypse then must be of a *later Date* than
 the Apostolic Age, if this *John the Elder* was
 he who saw it.

Now, not to mention here any internal Cha-
 racters that may be produced for an earlier time,
 is it not very strange that *Irenaeus*, the Disciple

[u] *Euseb. E. H. B. iii. c. 39.*

DISSERTATION I. 45

and Follower of *Papias*, should not be better informed by his Master, *who the Author was*, than to ascribe it, as he does, to *John* the Evangelist? Weak as *Papias* seems, he must have known this: And it was to his Disciple *Irenæus's* Purpose to have mentioned it, when he speaks of the *Time* when the Revelation was seen.

But if this was *Eusebius's* Opinion, it is plain he was not singular therein. *Dionysius*, as was before observed, wrote a large Critique on this Work, in which he endeavours to shew, that not the Apostle and Evangelist, but some other *John* was the Compiler thereof. I forbear to transcribe and examine this Critique, as it would be impertinent in me, after it has been so well done with great Candour and Impartiality by the learned Dr. *Lardner*, in his *Fourth Volume of the Credibility of the Gospel History*. The Reader will there find a large Account of *Dionysius's* Criticisms, together with many judicious Remarks by way of Reply to the several Objections urged by him. *Dionysius's* Argument in brief is, to shew from the Genius and Style, Method and Disposition of the Book, that it was not wrote by *John* the Apostle and Evangelist, on account of its Difference from his *first Epistle and Gospel*. I am ready to allow, “ that
 “ there are certain Words or Expressions very
 “ common in St. *John's* Gospel and Epistle,
 “ but not to be found at all, or very rarely in
 “ the *Revelation*.” But is this an Argument sufficient to prove, that he that wrote the former was not Author of the latter also? Are not the
 Sub-

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Subjects themselves very different? And does not the Description of *Things seen* in Prophetic Vision, admit of a great Difference of *Sentiments*, and *Words*, and *Manner* from that of an History or Familiar Epistle? Besides: The Apostles were not great Writers. Their Work was chiefly to preach the Gospel. And as Dr. *Lardner* has finely observed, “ If there were
 “ any Reason to think, that there was some con-
 “ siderable Distance of Time between the com-
 “ posing of any of these Books, that might be
 “ one good Way of accounting for Differences
 “ of Style. For it is not unlikely, that one and
 “ the same Person, writing upon different Ar-
 “ guments, and at a great Distance of Time,
 “ especially if he be one who does not fre-
 “ quently exercise his Style, or write in the in-
 “ termediate Space, should have a very differ-
 “ ent Manner in his several Performances” [x].

But because the learned Author just cited, having alledged Mr. *Blackwall's* Observation, that St. *John* often takes one thing two ways, both in the Affirmative and Negative; *He that bath the Son, bath Life, and he that bath not the Son, bath not Life*; with several such Instances; subjoins, “ But I don't remember such
 “ Forms of speaking in the Revelation.” I shall therefore here produce an Example or two, Rev. ii. 3. *And hast laboured, and hast not fainted.* Ver. 13. *And thou holdest fast my Name, and hast not denied my Faith.* Chap. iii. 5. *And*

[x] *C edit.* vol. iv. p. 722.

I will not blot out his Name out of the Book of Life; but I will confess his Name before my Father, and before his Angels. Ver. 8. And hast kept my Word, and hast not denied my Name.

I am encouraged to this from the amiable Author himself, as well as from what he elsewhere observes: “ Learned Men therefore are in the
 “ Right to produce every thing tending to ju-
 “ stify and support the common Opinion con-
 “ cerning the Writer of this Book, and to ob-
 “ serve all Evidences internal and external of
 “ its being the Work of *John the Apostle*” [y].

But suppose we should not be able to carry the Argument for this Book beyond what was granted by *Dionysius*, that *it was written by some holy and divinely inspired Person, but not by John the Apostle*. “ Then this Book is
 “ greatly degraded, its Authority is lessened,
 “ and it can no longer be reputed canon-
 “ ical” [z]. It may be so, if we judge of the Canon of Scripture by the Practice of some of the Ancients, who scrupled not to quote spurious and apocryphal Pieces under the Title of *holy and inspired Writings*; whilst those only of the Apostles, or that had their Sanction, were deemed canonical by them. But if we fix proper, clear, and determinate Ideas to the Terms, and do suppose the Writer, whoever he was, to be *an holy and divinely inspired Person*, what he says must be true, and consequently the Book is a Revelation from God, given for the Rule

[y] Ibid. p. 733.

[z] Ibid. p. 732.

of our Faith and Practice; in signifying which, unto his Servants, *Jesus Christ* was more nearly concerned than with the Publication of any other Book of the *New Testament*. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his Servants things which must shortly come to pass.* Chap. i. 1. *I Jesus have sent my Angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches,* Chap. xxii. 16. Allow the Writer to be an holy Man, divinely inspired, and I see no Class wherein to range this Work beneath the highest and most reputable Books of Scripture [a].

However, in order to carry the Argument farther, I will endeavour to make good this brief Observation; namely, that the Compiler of this Work has described and characterised himself to be *John* the Apostle and Evangelist. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his Servants Things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his Angel unto his Servant John; who bare Record of the Word of God, and of the Testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all Things that*

[a] I perfectly agree with an ingenious Writer, who, speaking of the *Visions of Hermas*, says, “For my part, I see no Medium between inspired and uninspired; they are either the Work of God, or the Work of Man; if of Man, they are then upon the same Foot with other human Compositions of the same Nature, that is, with the Compositions of other enthusiastic Visionaries, for in that Light only, to speak the Truth, I can consider them.” *Mr. Toll’s Remarks upon Mr. Church’s Vindication.*

he saw. This, with what follows by way of Motto, *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that bear the Words of this Prophecy, &c.* makes the Title Page of the Book.

He who did not put his Name neither to his Gospel, nor Epistles, prefixeth it here, in Conformity with all prophetical Writers; there being no Book without the Name of the Prophet. And if through Modesty he does not call himself *John the Apostle*; neither did St. Paul, in all his uncontroverted Epistles, assume that Title. Besides, the Apostleship of *John* was never disputed.

“His SERVANT *John* ;” an Epithet whereby the Apostles did usually style themselves: Thus, *Paul a SERVANT of Jesus Christ*, Rom. i. i. *James a SERVANT of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ*, James i. i. *Simon Peter a SERVANT and an Apostle of Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. i. i. *Jude the SERVANT of Jesus Christ*, *Y* i.

“He sent and signified it unto his Servant
“*John*, who BARE RECORD of the Word of
“God, and of the Testimony of *Jesus Christ*,
“and of all Things that he saw.” To be a
Witness of *Christ*, and of his Gospel, was the proper Work of an Apostle, *Luke* xxiv. 48. *And ye are Witnesses of these things*, *John* xv. 27. *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the Beginning.* This was also expressive of the Apostleship, see *Acts* i. 22, 25. Accordingly the Lord *Jesus* said unto *Paul*, *Acts* xxvi. 16. *For I have appeared unto thee*
H for

For this Purpose, to make thee a Minister AND A WITNESS both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee. Hence *Peter* and the other *Apostles* assumed this as their proper Characteristic. *Acts* v. 32. x. 39. *And we are his WITNESSES of these things.* 1 *Pet.* v. 1. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an Elder, and a WITNESS of the Sufferings of Christ.* If I need add more Proof, it shall be the unexceptionable Words of *John* in his Gospel, *Chap.* xix. 35. *And he that saw it BARE RECORD, and his RECORD is true.*

Now compare these Passages with the Words here subjoined to the Name of *John*,—*who bare Record of the Word of God, and of the Testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw*—and who would not think them purposely added, and sufficient indeed, to distinguish and specify the Writer, that he was *the Apostle* of that Name?

“ But (it is said [b]) all those Words may
 “ be very properly understood of this Book,
 “ the *Revelation*, or the things contained in
 “ it.” But with Submission, as those Words follow the Author’s Name in the Title of the Work, I rather think them declarative of himself; and this indeed to be the most natural and obvious Sense in which they are to be taken. Thus some of the ancient *Jewish* Prophets have described themselves in the Beginning of their

[b] *Credibility*, vol. iv. p. 703.

Books, by some former Mark or Token ; as *Jerem. Chap. i. 1, 2, 3. The Words of Jeremiah the Son of Hilkiab, of the Priests that were in Anathoth, in the Land of Benjamin: To whom the Word of the Lord came in the Days of Josiah.—It came also in the Days of Jeboiakim. Amos i. 1. The Words of Amos, who was among the Herdmen of Tekoab.* What will moreover abundantly confirm this, is, the rendering which some learned Moderns give to the Words: “ *who HAD TESTIFIED,*” so *Hammond*. “ *Who HAS BORNE WITNESS of the Word of God,*” so *Wells*. Wherefore I conclude, that those Words, subjoined to his Name, are descriptive of the Writer of this Book, or the Person to whom the *Revelation* was *signified* ; and that this was no other than *John* the Apostle and Evangelist.

But we have another Argument, from the *Occasion* and *Place* of his Banishment. *I John, who also am your Brother, and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of Jesus Christ.* By the *Word of God*, and the *Testimony of Jesus Christ*, cannot be meant the *Apocalypse* : For he could not bear Record of what as yet he had not received. Let us then connect what he says of himself in these two Places together (which is but fair) and we shall find the plain Account of the Matter to be this, That *John*, for having borne *Witness of the Word of God*, and for the *Testi-*

mony of Jesus Christ, either by writing, or preaching, or both, of the Facts of the Gospel — was banished into the Isle of *Patmos*: Or in other Words, those Circumstances or Things, on account of which he described himself, *John who bare Record, &c.* were the *Occasion* of his Exile.

Nor must that other Particular, the *Place* to which *John* was banished, where he had these *Visions*, be passed over in Silence. None of our Criticks on this Book, either ancient or modern, who have mentioned the *two* Sepulchres at *Ephesus* (tho' *Jerome*, who saw them, observes that some thought they were two Monuments of the same *John* the Evangelist) have given us the least Hint of *two Johns* who were in *Patmos*. If *Papias*, or one of the Fathers had said, that *John the Elder was in Patmos*, as others assert that *John* the Apostle was there; we had, perhaps, been more puzzled to know unto which of the *two* to ascribe the *Revelation*. That *he* was there who *saw* the *Revelation*, is not denied. And the Truth is, all ancient Writers mention this peculiarly of *John* the Apostle and Evangelist. This we have from *Eusebius* himself. “ In this Persecution (meaning that of
 “ *Domitian*) it is reported, that *John* the Apo-
 “ stle, and also Evangelist, who yet lived, was
 “ banished into the Isle of *Patmos*, upon Ac-
 “ count of the Testimony he exhibited to the
 “ Word of God.” E. H. B. iii. c. 18. “ More-
 “ over, the Account of the Ancients amongst
 “ us declares, that then also the Apostle *John*
 “ was

“ was released from his Banishment in the
 “ Island, and took up his Habitation again at
 “ *Ephesus*.” B. iii. c. 20. And again *Chap. xxiii*.
 “ At the same Time the Apostle and also Evan-
 “ gelist *John* (the same whom *Jesus* loved)
 “ remaining yet alive in *Asia*, governed the
 “ Churches there, being returned from his Ex-
 “ ile in the Island after the Death of *Do-*
 “ *mitian*.”

If any think, “ this [c] ought not to be
 “ mentioned as a distinct Consideration ; be-
 “ cause that those Writers, supposing this Book
 “ to have been written by *John* the Apostle,
 “ concluded thence, that *he* was banished into
 “ the Island of *Patmos* ;” I beg leave to dissent
 from them. For tho’ this Book does declare
 that the Writer thereof was in the Isle that is
 called *Patmos* ; yet under whose Reign it was ;
 the Time of his Return ; his Residence in *Asia* ;
 and Government of the Churches there after-
 ward ; these are Circumstances of which the
 Book is wholly silent : And it is the Relation of
 these, which could not be gathered from the
 Book, that makes up the Testimonies above
 cited. If the Ancients had said nothing but what
 was borrowed from, or supported by the Book,
 then indeed one might omit their Testimonies
 on this Occasion. But when they record parti-
 cular Circumstances and Events which they con-
 nect with (before or after) St. *John*’s Banish-
 ment into *Patmos*, and some of them probable

[c] *Credibility*, vol. iv. p. 705.

enough,

enough, their Evidence comes very proper, as derived from contemporary Persons who knew the Truth of the Facts. “ Hear a Relation “ (saith *Clement*, Bishop of *Alexandria*) which “ is not a feigned Story, but a real Truth, delivered concerning *John* the Apostle, and kept “ in Remembrance. For after the Death of the “ Tyrant he returned from the Island *Patmos* “ to *Ephesus*, and being thereto requested, he “ went to the neighbouring Provinces, in some “ Places constituting Bishops, in others setting “ in Order whole Churches, and elsewhere electing into the Clergy some one or other of “ those, who were made known to him by the “ Spirit.” —I omit the Story which is preserved in *Eusebius*, E. H. B. iii. *Chap.* xxiii. as not being to my present Point, as is the above Introduction thereto.

But it is not to be wondered at if any who question the Genuineness of the Book, do except against making the Testimony of the Ancients to the Banishment of *John* the Apostle into *Patmos*, a distinct Consideration in Proof of his being the Author thereof. For this will prove too much for them. For as the Fathers unanimously agree in their Testimony, that *John* the Apostle and Evangelist was in *Patmos*, it is probable that, whatever such Persons as *Cerdo* or *Marcion* might say, before *Caius* contradicted and brought into question the *Revelation*, it was ever received in the Church as the Work of that Apostle.

Since

Since then *John*, the Writer of the *Revelation*, describes himself by this Circumstance, of the Place of his Banishment; and it is confirmed by the Testimony of the Ancients, that *John* the Apostle and Evangelist was in Banishment there; the Proof that *John* who wrote this Book was the Apostle and Evangelist, is, I think, as full and strong to us as if he had peculiarly and expressly so styled himself. Here indeed our critical Historian seems to be right. "It is certain (saith he) that if the Apostle St. *John* is not Author of the *Revelations*, he was at least desirous the World should think so" [c].

But the Authority of this Book has not been ever esteemed where one would have expected it most. The Author I last quoted, mentions for Instance, the Council of *Laodicea*, "which is the first, at least that we hear of, that drew up the Catalogue of the inspired Writings, held about the Year 360, by thirty-two *Asiatic* Bishops." Thus saith he, "those *Revelations* were even disowned in the Place where they were said to be written; and proscribed by those very Bishops of *Asia* who assumed the Title of Heirs and Successors to St. *John*; assembled at *Laodicea*, in the Midst of the Seven Churches to whom the *Revelations* were directed, and of which Church we meet with so glorious a Testimony in that very Work" [d]. Without call-

[c] Page 43. Dis. Hist. and Crit. [d] Ibid. 55, 56.

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ing in Question the geographical Skill of this learned Author, in placing *Laodicea* in the *Midst of the Seven Churches*; and also his Acquaintance with the Book itself, in the *glorious Testimony*, he speaks of, given to that Church (neither of which is true, and shews, by the way, that he is almost as hasty as was *Caius*) we may observe, that their Omission of the *Revelation* in their Catalogue, is, perhaps, only a Proof that they they thought it a Book not proper to be *publickly* read [e]. But suppose this Council did indeed not esteem it to be the Work of *John* the Apostle and Evangelist. From the Beginning it was not so. According to *Tertullian*, who flourished about 160 Years before this Council, the Churches of *Asia* were of a very different Opinion. His Words, as made *English* by the Author of *the Discourse himself*, are these very remarkable ones: “ We
 “ also have the Churches that were founded by
 “ *St. John*; for notwithstanding that *Marcion*
 “ looked upon his Revelation as spurious, yet
 “ if we trace the Succession of the Bishops from
 “ the Beginning, we shall manifestly find that
 “ *St. John* was the Author of this Piece.”
 Should *Tertullian’s* Evidence be objected to, because he dwelt in *Africa*, and was capable of being deceived: we may add that of *Melito*, Bishop of *Sardis*, who flourished before *Tertullian*, and who wrote a Treatise upon this Book. Our *historical* and *critical* Author would in-

[e] *Credibility*, vol. viii. p. 293. *Richardson’s Canon of the N. T. Find.* p. 15. n.

deed fain render his Authority doubtful, by saying, "as the Work is lost, we are ignorant
 " whether it set the *Revelations* in a favourable
 " or disadvantageous Light:" Yea, he would insinuate, that possibly it might be struck at by *Melito*, in that very Work: And the better to serve his turn, he has also unfairly suppressed [f] Part of its Title, which expressly ascribed the *Revelation* to *John*. But there are none, I believe, who examine his Vouchers in Danger of being misled by him. Learned and impartial Persons will rather consider *Melito* as a very good Authority for this Book: "It is plain (saith
 " Dr. *Lardner*) he ascribed that Book to *John*,
 " and very likely to *John* the Apostle. I think
 " it very probable he esteemed it a Book of Ca-
 " nonical Authority" [g]. See what is said of him by the learned *Chillingworth*, in his ARGUMENT drawn from the Doctrine of the MILLENARIES against Infallibility.

Melito living so near the Age of St. *John*, and being Bishop of one of the Seven *Asian* Churches, "could neither be ignorant of their Tradition
 " about it, nor impose upon them," says Sir *Isaac Newton* [h].

[f] Page 13. The Title of the Book in *Eusebius*, to which this Author refers, is this, *Concerning the Devil, and of the Revelation of John*: But he has curtailed it thus, *Of the Devil of the Revelations*. What strange Work would not this manner of rendering Titles make with ancient Monuments!

[g] *Credib.* vol. i. p. 330.

[h] *Observ.* p. 248.

Wherefore the Sense of the *Laodicean* Synod, whatever it was, comes by far too late. And tho' this Book has met with a Fate somewhat like that of *Jesus Christ*, its divine Author, who was not much esteemed in his own Country, several Reasons may be assigned as the Cause thereof; such as the great Defection to *Montanism* that soon spread all over *Asia*: The Attack of Heretics, as *Cerdo* and *Marcion*, and the *Alogians*, who also denied the Genuineness of St. *John's* Gospel, and fathered that too upon *Cerintus*; the Controversy about the *Millenarian* Doctrine, which was grounded chiefly on some mistaken Passages in this Work; and finally, the bold Assertion and Critique of those two orthodox Writers, *Caius* and *Dionysius*, who ventured to disparage and lessen the Authority of the Book which they did not understand; and who, being Men of great Learning, Credit, and Influence, especially the latter, were followed in the fourth and fifth Centuries, in some particular Notions, by almost all the East.

But as we have above seen the greatest Probability that the Writer was no other than *John* the Apostle and Evangelist; and since certain Characteristics appear in those Parts that are opened, which plainly speak the Book an extraordinary and divine Composition; we will take our leave of this Argument.

DISSERTATION II.

Concerning the TIME when the REVELATION was written.

IT is observable of the ancient Prophets, that, except five or six of them, they have specified the Reign of the Prince, and given other Notes of Time, when they prophesied, or had their respective Visions. If *St. John* had done this, with the Exactness of some of them, we had been spared the Labour of the present Enquiry. However, we must take things as they are; and where we cannot arrive at Certainty, be content with what is most probable.

All Writers allow, *St. John* lived to a very great Age: But as to the Time of his Banishment into *Patmos*, where he had these Visions, they differ at least thirty Years; some supposing it to be under either *Claudius* or *Nero*; whilst others fix it toward the End of the Reign of *Domitian*, in *Anno* 95, or 96.

It must be confessed, that the most ancient Evidence we have from Antiquity is in Favour of the latter Opinion. “ *Irenæus*, writing concerning the Number of the Name of *Antichrist*, mentioned in the *Revelation* of *St. John*, does in these very Words, in his fifth

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“ Book against Heresies, thus speak concerning
 “ *John*. But if at this present Time his
 “ Name ought publicly to be preached, it would
 “ have been spoken of by him who saw the Re-
 “ velation. For it was seen not a long Time
 “ since, but almost in our Age about the lat-
 “ ter End of Domitian's Reign” [i]. This is
 full and direct to the Point. And *Irenæus* had
 probably all the Opportunity of knowing the
 Truth hereof, and of being an authentic Wit-
 ness; for it is said, he “ had been a frequent
 “ Auditor of those who had conversed with St.
 “ *John* himself,” and was moreover inquisitive
 in all “ the accurate and ancient Copies of this
 “ Book [k].”

But allowing this: Notwithstanding *Irenæus's* Testimony is so very express and positive, it may be excepted against. For how particularly conversant soever he might be in all the accurate and ancient Copies (which, I think, are his own Expressions, and by the way, would lead one to suspect the Book was not wrote so near his own Time) he appears to have had no judicious or sublime Thoughts of the Prophecies thereof; but following *Papias* (who, if he was an Auditor of *John* the Apostle, and a Companion of *Polycarp*, was a weak Man, of a very shallow Understanding [l]) he has explained the Reign of the Saints upon Earth in a gross sensual Manner, of Feasting, and getting of

[i] *Euseb. E. H. B. iii. c. 18.*

[k] *Whiston's Essay on the Revelation*, 2d Edit. p. 36.

[l] *Euseb. E. H. B. iii. c. 39.*

Children, &c. [m] and was one of those early Fathers who contributed to raise a Prejudice against the Book. And then, as to chronological Facts, his small Acquaintance with them appears from the Account he gives of the Age of our Saviour, that he lived either till he was *Fifty*, or between *Forty* and *Fifty* Years old. He who could mistake in so plain a Case as the Age of *Christ*, and vouch *Apostolical Authority* for it too (unless Wrong has been done him here, and a Passage be inserted in his Works, which is not his: Which some may suspect, tho' I think the Passage is generally reputed [n] genuine; I say, he who could do this) might easily mistake the Age of a Book, and his Warrant for fixing its Date so low as the latter End of *Domitian's* Reign.

If it be said, “ *Irenæus* followed an Hypothesis in the former Case, whereby the good Man “ was led into that Error:” who will ascertain that he did not the like in fixing the Date of the *Apocalypse*? Certainly he followed an Hypo-

[m] *Whitby* of the *Millennium*, p. 718, 720. The learned Dr. *Lardner*, whose Account I rather chuse to follow, saith thus: “ But *Irenæus* and *Lactantius*, who were “ *Millenarians*, don't express themselves in that Manner. “ What they say, is, that at the Time of the first Resurrection, there will be found some good Men living “ upon the Earth, and that of them in the Space of a “ Thousand Years shall be born a numerous Race, a “ godly Seed: Over whom likewise the raised Saints are “ to reign, and by whom they are to be served.” *Credib.* vol. iv. p. 696.

[n] *Jones* of the Canon, vol. i. Appendix, p. 550:

thesis

thesis in the Interpretation thereof. And where he had an Argument to prosecute, or an Adversary to oppose, even Dr. *Cave* himself cannot but own, “ the Eagerness of Disputation “ tempted him to make good his Assertion from “ any plausible Pretence” [o].

Besides; I do not find the Generality of learned Persons are disposed to give Credit to this ancient Father in another Point of Chronology; I mean, as to the Time of St. *Matthew's* writing his Gospel: which, according to him, was, “ while *Peter* and *Paul* were “ preaching at *Rome*” [p]. Now *Paul*, it is allowed, was there in the third Year of *Nero*, about *Anno* 59 or 60. And if *Irenæus's* Testimony was to be admitted here, since he makes *Matthew's* Gospel to be the *first written*, the Consequence plainly is, *that the Church was without any authentic History of Christ till almost thirty Years after his Ascension*: A strange Consequence! especially if what Mr. *Le Clerc* supposes is true, that there were many spurious Gospels published in that Time: and therefore justly avoided by most Writers, as well ancient as modern [q]; who rather think St. *Matthew* wrote his Gospel about eight Years after the Ascension; *i. e.* at least twenty Years sooner than this Father would make it.

If his Testimony then be invalidated, as I think it must [r], at least in a Point of *Chro-*

[o] *Life of Irenæus.* [p] *Eusebius*, E. H. B. v. c. 8.

[q] *Jones of the Canon*, vol. iii. p. 61, 62.

[r] See Dr. *Middleton's Free Inquiry*, p. 45, &c. “ He
nology,

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nology, I need not concern myself with that of other Writers on that Side of the Question, who, as far as I am able to discern, all seem, more or less, to build upon him.

EPIPHANIUS, who lived in the fourth Century, expressly affirms that *John* prophesied in the Time of *Claudius Cæsar*, when he was in the Isle of *Patmos*. But the Blunders charged upon him in this Place (tho' probably not so great as what *Petavius* apprehended) together with his manner of Replying to the Objection of the *Alogians*, has lessened his Authority with learned Persons. However,

The *Alogi* were a Sect that arose after the *Montanists*, and are considered by EPIPHANIUS, as distinct from them, inasmuch as they rejected the Gospel of St. *John*, and also the *Revelation*. Their Objection to the *Revelation* they founded upon this, namely, that there was not a Church of Christians in *Thyatira* in St. *John's* Time, when the *Revelation* was wrote. How then could he write to a Church that was not in Being? If what they said was only a Cavil on the Word *Church* (as Sectaries have been always prone to appropriate that Name wholly to their Party, and the *Cataphrygians* (of whom some conceive the *Alogi* were a Branch) it seems did assert, "the Faith of

" was a very pious Man, and a great Lover of the *Christian Religion*, the Truth of which he sealed with his
 " Blood; but that he was any great Judge of Things or
 " Opinions, will not be thought by any who shall but
 " carefully read his Writings." *Le Clerc. Annot. John* i. 15.

" the

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“ the *Christians* was first revealed to *us*, and
 “ took its Beginning from *us*” [s]), then they
 might have said the same with Regard to *Smyrna*, *Pergamus*, and the other *Asian* Cities; that
 they had no Churches till the Days when they
 were perverted, and had embraced their parti-
 cular Opinions. But if they meant more by it,
 than merely to cavil, the Objection deserves
 Notice. Those Heretics, who chiefly resided in,
 or near *Asia* [t], it is possible, might have some
 Reason for this positive bold Assertion. It might
 be true, that there was no Church at *Thyatira*
 so low as the latter End of *Domitian's* Reign,
 when *Irenæus* dates the *Apocalypse*; and yet
 there might have been a Church in that City
 both before and since.

When *St. Paul* went through *Phrygia*, and
Myfia to *Troas*, it lay in his Way to pass thro'
Thyatira: And it is probable that from *Troas*
 the Apostle was called into *Macedonia*, whither
 when he came he met with *Lydia* of the City
 of *Thyatira*, *Acts* xvi. 12, 13. This was *A. D.*
 51, about three Years before the Death of
Claudius.

At this Time *Lydia* and her Household, be-
 ing then vending their Merchandise at *Philippi*,
 embraced the Christian Faith and were bap-
 tized. Now, from the Manner in which Chri-
 stianity was first planted, it is highly probable
 a Church did arise in *Thyatira*, from those Con-
 verts, if not from the Apostles preaching there

[s] *Socrates*, E. H. B. ii. c. 37.

[t] *Hist. Mont.* Ar. xvii. Sect. 4.

themselves. “ The Zeal of those primitive Christians being such (as Mr. *Daubuz* well observes) that the Conversion of one Man gave occasion afterwards to the Settlement of a whole Church, where he failed not to propagate the Gospel. This even *Lydia* might do by herself, or by those Countrymen which she corresponded withal; the best Purple or Mercers Ware, coming from that Country : And the Apostles were not so negligent, upon so hopeful a Beginning, to refuse going so far to finish the Work ; especially St. *John*, who lived so near them for many Years.” [u]

Here then one might conclude almost for certain, the *Alogians* were wrong. There was probably a Church of *Christians* at *Thyatira* in *Claudius's* Reign, which might continue to exist till after that of *Nero*. And towards the latter End of *Domitian's* Reign, when *Irenæus* dates the *Apocalypse*, there might be no Church then. *Thyatira* might be in Ruins for some Time ; or the Church might come to nothing afterwards. Both these are possible in that Land of frequent Earthquakes. And it is a probable Conjecture of an honoured Friend, to whom I am obliged for the Matter of this Argument, that the Threatning contained in the Letter sent to that Church, *Rev. ii. 22, 23. Behold, I will cast her into a Bed, and them that commit Adultery with her into great Tribulation, except they repent of their Deeds. And I will kill her Children with Death ; and all the*

[u] *Daubuz* on *Rev. ii. 18.*

Churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the Reins and Hearts: And I will give unto every one of you according to your Works: might possibly relate to some such impending Judgment.

Upon the whole. The *Alogians* might be right in saying, that there was no Church at *Thyatira*, about the latter End of *Domitian's* Reign, when *Irenæus* dates the *Apocalypse*; and yet be absolutely mistaken in saying, there was no Church in Being there in the Time of *St. John*, or during his Life.

But whatever becomes of *John's* being banished to *Patmos* in *Claudius's* Reign, which may serve as an Instance of the Uncertainty of the Chronology of those Times, *Eusebius*, in the Beginning of that Chapter, where he reciteth the Testimony of *Irenæus*, speaketh of *St. John's* Banishment into *Patmos* under *Domitian*, as a Matter merely reported of. And *Sir Isaac Newton* [u] observes, that afterwards in his Evangelical Demonstrations, *Eusebius* conjoins the Banishment of *John* into *Patmos* with the Deaths of *Peter* and *Paul*: And so do *Tertullian* and others.

In the twelfth Year of *Nero's* Reign, at the Breaking out of the War in *Judea*, when the whole Province was full of unspeakable Calamities (which yet were exceeded by the Dread of what was threatened [x]) the Disciples, it is said, dispersed themselves, and *John* retired into

[u] *Observ.* p. 236. [x] *Josephus of the War*, B. ii. s. 18. and *Vales.* Note on *Eusebius*, E. H. B. ii. c. 26.

Asia [y]. And it is probable *John* might be soon secured, and banished into *Patmos* by Order of the *Roman* Government, if not as a *Jew*, and the Leader of a *Jewish* Sect, yet as accounted a *sedition* Person, who propagated what they termed a *new Superstition*. Either Reason would be thought sufficient at that Time to procure his Exile [z], tho' the latter, according to his own Account, was the principal Occasion. Chap. i. 9. *I John, who also am your Brother, and Companion in Tribulation, and in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of Jesus Christ.*

This Tribulation will well suit the Time of *Nero*, who began the first general Persecution of the *Christians*. And accordingly Sir *Isaac Newton* fixes the Banishment of *John* into *Patmos*, and the Date of the *Apocalypse* about this Time.

Mr. *Whiston* [a], indeed, beside the great Strefs he lays on *Irenæus's* Testimony, has offered two other Arguments for the late writing of the *Apocalypse*, which deserves some Attention, especially since he looks upon them as *Demonstrations*. “ The first is, that had this
“ Book, wherein so much longer an Interval
“ than a Thousand Years is directly foretold
“ before the general Resurrection and Day of
“ Judgment, been written in the Days of *Nero*,
“ the Apostles and first Christians could not

[y] *Euseb.* B. iii. c. 1.

[z] *Ibid.* B. ii. c. 25.

[a] *Essay on Rev.* p. 37.

“ possibly have expected them to come in their
 “ own Time; as they certainly did, till near
 “ the End of the first Century.”

I do not deny the apparent Force of this Argument. But I must call in question the Truth of the Fact upon which it is founded: For where does it appear that the Apostles and first Christians did certainly expect the general Resurrection and Day of Judgment to come in their own Time? We are referred, indeed, to Part ii. *Pref. Coroll. 2.*

What this learned Person has there advanced concerning our Saviour himself, that he, when on Earth, did not know the exact Time of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; and his Disciples, that they, then, did not well understand what was meant by the Expression of his *coming*, may be granted. But that after the Ascension of our Lord, and the Effusion of the Spirit, till near the End of the first Century, the Apostles and first Christians expected the general Resurrection and Day of Judgment to come in their own Time, is the Point that still remains to be proved. For tho’ what Mr. *Whiston* says is true, that St. *Paul* does speak in the first Person plural, *We which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord*, 1 *Thess.* iv. 15, 17. the Conclusion which Mr. *Whiston* would draw, will not follow from thence. A judicious Commentator observes [*b*], “ It was usual among the
 “ *Jews*, to speak in the same Manner of the

[*b*] Dr. *Bensen*, in loc. 2d Edit.

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“ Persons of their Nation, tho’ they lived in
 “ very distant Ages. Thus, when the Gene-
 “ ration that came out of *Egypt* were in gene-
 “ ral dead, *Moses* addresses their Children, *Deut.*
 “ i. 6. and says, *The Lord our God spake unto us*
 “ *in Horeb ;*” and *ſ* 9. “ *I spake unto you at*
 “ *that Time—and the Lord your God hath*
 “ *multiplied you, and behold you are this Day*
 “ *as the Stars of Heaven for Multitude :*
 “ *ſ* 19. *When we departed from Horeb, we*
 “ *went thro’ all that great and terrible Wil-*
 “ *derness, which you saw, &c.* And so he speaks
 “ in the Remainder of that Chapter, and in the
 “ following Chapters. And *Deut.* xxvi. 6, &c.
 “ when they should be settled in the Land of
 “ *Canaan*, in future Generations, *Moses* taught
 “ them to say, *The Egyptians evil intreated us,*
 “ *and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard Bon-*
 “ *dage : And when we cried unto the Lord*
 “ *God of our Fathers, the Lord heard our Voice ;*
 “ *and brought us forth out of Egypt.* See the
 “ like Phraseology, *Judges* ii. 1, &c. *Matth.*
 “ xix. 8. and xxii. 31. *Mark* x. 3. *John* vi. 32.
 “ and vii. 19, 22. *Acts* vii. 38, 52, 53.—Now
 “ why might not *St. Paul* say [*we, and*
 “ *us,*] when he was speaking of *Christians* of
 “ different Ages ; as well as *Moses* and others
 “ say so of the *Jews* of different Ages? Are
 “ not *Christians* often considered as one Church,
 “ one Family, one City, one Kingdom, one
 “ Temple, one Building, one Body, or as
 “ Members of one and the same Body ; whether
 “ they be in Heaven or on Earth, or in what
 “ Age

“ Age or Nation soever they live? And what
 “ Impropropriety can there be for any of them to
 “ say [*we*, and *us*,] who consider themselves as
 “ part of that Church and Body?—It is evi-
 “ dent that St. *Paul* expected not to escape
 “ Death, but to die and rise again. 2 *Corinth.*
 “ iv. 14. v. 6, 8. *Phil.* i. 20—25. iii. 10, 11.
 “ 2 *Tim.* iv. 6. St. *Peter* expected shortly to
 “ put off his bodily Tabernacle, even as our
 “ Lord *Jesus Christ* had foretold him, 2 *Pet.*
 “ i. 14.—And finally, when the *Thessalonians*,
 “ by the Means either of some weak or design-
 “ ing Persons, were led into this very Mistake,
 “ that *the Day of the Lord was then just at*
 “ *hand*, St. *Paul* himself wrote a second Epistle
 “ to them, in which he assures them that he
 “ did not say, or insinuate any such thing, as
 “ *that the Day of the Lord was then at hand.*
 “ For a grand Apostacy would arise in the *Chri-*
 “ *stian* Church: And the Man of Sin exalt
 “ himself as a temporal Prince, and be de-
 “ stroyed, before the coming of the Day of
 “ the Lord.”

However, after all the Proof to which we
 are referred, “ that the Apostles and first *Chri-*
 “ *stians* did certainly expect the general Resur-
 “ rection and Day of Judgment to come in their
 “ own Time,” Mr. *Whiston*, it must be ac-
 knowledged, speaks with great Modesty [*c*];
 “ I only say, they seem to have imagined, that
 “ the great Day of Judgment would not be very

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“ long deferred beyond the Destruction of *Jerusalem*.” So that whatever Demonstration there be in the first Argument, the Principle itself, upon which only it is conclusive, is at length owned to be not strictly certain.

“ The second Argument [*d*] is, the want of
 “ any one plain Allusion to, or Citation of any
 “ Part of this Book in most of the later Books
 “ of the *New Testament*; particularly in the
 “ *Apostolical Constitutions*, wherein almost all the
 “ other Books are cited, and that not seldom;
 “ but wherein the *Apocalypse* is never either
 “ cited or alluded to, as not extant when any
 “ of the Parts of that Book were written, which
 “ yet extend to *A. D.* 86. whence it is almost
 “ certain the *Apocalypse* was not then written.”

I make no Scruple to take this upon Mr. *Whiston's* Word, “ that the *Apocalypse* is never
 “ either cited or alluded to in the *Apostolical*
 “ *Constitutions*.” But he must excuse me if I
 make a contrary Use thereof to what he has done.
 For from hence, I think it is almost certain,
 that the *Apostolical Constitutions* were com-
 piled about the latter End of the fourth or the
 Beginning of the fifth Century, when the crude
 Notion of the *Millennium*, with the Criticisms
 of *Caius* and *Dionysius*, had brought into and
 had kept the *Apocalypse* in Disrepute, in that
 Part of the World: or, if they were written
 sooner (as indeed they seem not to have been)
 that the Compiler of them depended upon the

[*d*] Ibid. p. 37.

chronological Character from *Irenæus*, for the Date of the *Apocalypse*, and had Art enough not to contradict himself, by citing Passages from a Work which he intended should appear posterior to his own. Now whether there be not as great Probability for the Truth of either of these Conclusions, as for Mr. *Whiston's*, I leave the intelligent Reader to judge.

Having intimated elsewhere [e], that there are certain internal Characters for the *early* Date of the *Apocalypse*, this will be a proper Place wherein to produce some of them. And the *first* sort of these Characters I shall instance in, are the many *Allusions* there are in this Book to the *Jewish* Service, the *Temple*, the *Altar*, the *Holy City*, all as actually subsisting. The first Vision is entirely formed upon the Plan of the High Priest's Service, in dressing the golden Lamps; see the *Observations on the First Vision*. And when St. *John* began to prophesy, after he had eaten the *little Book*, the Models and Machinery he was directed to measure and count upon, are taken from the *Temple*, and the *Altar*, and *them that worshipped therein*, Chap. xi. 1, 2. Now, let the unprejudiced Reader judge, which is most probable, that these things were utterly abolished for more than twenty Years before; or, that at the Time of these Visions, they continued in Being?

But *secondly*, there is another sort of internal Character which I shall propound, which I take from the *Book*, which was *in the Right Hand of him that sat on the Throne*, and the

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Visions which St. *John* had at the Opening of the first *Six Seals* thereof. I have had occasion elsewhere to take Notice, what *John* observed of the Book, or Roll, that *it was written within and on the Backside*. In this Respect it resembled that *Roll* which the Prophet *Ezekiel* saw; which was *written within and without*. Here is then a *Likeness*: And if we take the Rule and compare spiritual things with spiritual, we may suppose it to be, as *Ezekiel's* Roll was, the Symbol of *an heavy Prophecy*; and have a probable Ground or Reason to apply it to the *Destruction* of *Jerusalem*. I say a probable Ground or Reason so to apply, if not also to restrain it thereto. For, that the Roll was *full of Hieroglyphics and Emblems, descriptive of the successive Fortunes of the Church, and Empire of the World, to the Consummation of all Things; and contained the Contents of the Book of the Revelation itself*; appears, I own, to me (notwithstanding it has the Countenance of great and venerable Names) a pretty high bold Fancy, destitute of all Foundation.

However, from this general Observation on the *Book*, I pass more particularly to the *Seals* thereof; and observe, that the *Visions*, which St. *John* had at the opening of the first *Six Seals*, relate to the Affairs of the *Jews*, before and at the *Destruction of their City and Nation*; and therefore the *Apocalypse* was written before that Destruction. This is no novel Opinion; but was what *Arethus*, Bishop of *Cæsarea* in *Cappadocia*, about the Year 540, affirmed, who

says, that it was also the Sense of former Commentators, who wrote before him. However, it will be incumbent on me to shew, that these Visions do indeed relate to the forementioned Destruction, My Arguments for it are various.

1. The first I take from the *Horses*, which are seen to go forth on the Opening of the first Four Seals, *Chap. vi. 1—9*. As their Number is equal to that of the *Chariots*, and their Colours are the same with those *Horses*, which were seen by *Zecbariah*, *Chap. vi. 1—8. viz.* white, red, black, grised or pale; the Allusion seems plain and obvious to the *Vision* of that Prophet.—They are there called *the Four Spirits of the Heavens*, by whom are drawn the *Chiefs*, who personate the Means and Instruments of the Administration of the Government and Rule of the Heavens, or of him who sitteth therein, among the States and Nations upon Earth. The Parade of the Chariots and Horsemen, is a Piece of Scenery, that, in former Prophecies, betokened some notable Event on the Enemies of God's Church and People; such as the *Jews* were now become. These preceded in *Isaiab's* Vision, the Fall of *Babylon*, *Chap. xxi. 7, 9*. See also *Chap. xliii. 17*. Thus saith the Lord, which bringeth forth the Chariot and Horse, the Army, and the Power, *Jer. xlv. 4, 9*. Harness the Horses, and get up, ye Horsemen—Let the mighty Men come forth—For this is the Day of the Lord God of Hosts, a Day of Vengeance. If those four Horsemen had a Unity of Design, as I think
may

may be gathered from the Voice of each *Cherub*, calling upon St. *John* to *come and see*—it may with great Propriety be considered, whether there was any Event so remarkable for their Parade, if we argue from former Prophecies, as the *Destruction* of *Jerusalem* and the *Jewish Nation*.

2. The second Reason I take from the Scene, or Imagery exposed to the View of St. *John*, on the opening of the *fifth Seal*. *And when he had opened the fifth Seal, I saw under the Altar, or round about the Bottom thereof, where the Blood of the Sacrifices was usually sprinkled or poured (now no longer of any Avail to make Atonement for Sins) the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held, & 9. And they cried with a loud Voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our Blood on them that dwell on the Earth? And it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little Season, until their Fellow Servants also, and their Brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled, & 10, 11. i. e. till this People had filled up the Measure of their own and their Forefathers Sins, by destroying all those that were sent unto them, as our Saviour predicted, Matth. xxiii. 34—37. that on that Generation might be inflicted, a Punishment as great as if they had been the actual Murderers of all the righteous and good Men that ever were unjustly slain upon the Earth.*

3. The third Reason I take from the Vision which St. *John* had at the Opening the *sixth* Seal, which exactly answers the Description, which *Jesus Christ* gave in Prophecy, of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. I have no occasion but to recite his Words, and *John's* Vision. *Jesus Christ*. *There shall be Earthquakes in divers Places. The Sun shall be darkned, and the Moon shall not give her Light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven. Now learn a Parable of the Fig Tree; when his Branch is yet tender and putteth forth Leaves. John. And I beheld when he had opened the sixth Seal, and lo, there was a great Earthquake, and the Sun became black as Sackcloth of Hair, and the Moon became as Blood; and the Stars of Heaven fell unto the Earth, even as a Fig Tree casteth her untimely Figs. Jesus Christ. And the Powers of the Heavens shall be shaken. John. And the Heavens departed as a Scrowl when it is rolled together; and every Mountain and Island were moved out of their Places. Jesus Christ. Then shall be great Tribulation, such as was not since the Beginning of the World to this Time, no nor ever shall be. Then shall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven, with Power and great Glory. Then shall they begin to say to the Mountains, Fall on us; and to the Hills, Cover us. John. And the Kings of the Earth, and the great Men, and the rich Men, and the chief Captains, and the mighty Men, and every Bondman, and every Freeman, hid*

themselves in the Dens, and in the Rocks of the Mountains; and said to the Mountains and Rocks, Fall on us [d], and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb: for the great Day of his Wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? The Vision of the one is so like the Prediction of the other, that I humbly propose it to the Reader's Consideration, whether some special Warrant and Authority is not requisite to ascribe them to different Events? That the Destruction of Babylon, and Edom, was foretold in somewhat like Language and Phraseology, I grant. But since Jesus Christ collected and applied all those Phrases in the ancient Prophets, to the Destruction of Jerusalem, and did, in his Description declare, that no Tribulation should be like it; can a like Scene of Things, painted almost in the very same Words, and

[d] As these proverbial Expressions (which denote great Anguish and Perplexity) occur but twice before in Scripture, where they are evidently put into the Mouths of Jews, as *e. g.* touching their Overthrow by the Assyrians, *Hos. x. 8.* and concerning the Destruction of their City and Nation by the Romans, *Luke xxiii. 30.* When we find the same Expressions here uttered, would one not naturally think it the Language of the same People, and this their Exclamation, foretold by Christ, under the dreadful Calamities which befell them during the Siege of Jerusalem? Why should it be supposed to belong to other People, Times and Occasions that bear no Similitude? In Compare with the Visitation of Jerusalem, "all the Evils which fell upon the Gentile World afterwards, were of no Name and Consideration", saith the learned Spencer. *Of Prodigies*, p. 274.

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coming indeed originally from one and the same Person, be well understood of any other Event [e].

If it be said, that I reduce the Time of the Opening of the Seals, six of which some make to contain a Period of Prophecies for above 200 Years, to a short Interval; I answer, 1. That I find no Ground to ascribe a distinct Prophecy and Period of Time to each *Seal*, as there is to the *Trumpets*, Chap. x. 7. The Seals could not be opened at one and the same Instant of Time, without doing Violence to the Volume. And since *John* had a Vision at the Opening of each, why each Vision should relate to a distinct Period, rather than to the different Circumstances and Events of one and the same Period, I own I am utterly at a Loss to know. Persons acquainted with, what Mr. Mede styles, the *A, B, C, of Prophecy*, who consider how the Four Monarchies were described to *Daniel* in several distinct Visions, and under different Types, will, with more Ease, be disposed to admit these Visions to be several Parts of one and the same Prophecy; especially, as the Opening of the

[e] Whilst I feared the Imputation of Singularity, I have the Pleasure to find the learned Dr. *Lightfoot*, who had no other End in Pursuit but the *Harmony, Chronicle, and Order of the New Testament*, necessitated (as himself declares) to place the writing of the *Revelation* under the Twelfth of *Nero*. For this he assigns several Reasons out of some Passages in the Book itself: And particularly understands the Opening of the Six Seals, of the Ruin and Rejection of the *Jewish Nation*, and the Desolation of their City, as I have done. See *his Works*, vol. i. p. 340.

Seals,

Seals, that occasioned them, related to the unfolding one and the same Roll.

2. If the Horses that carried those personalized Subjects, namely, *Victory*, *Discord*, *Justice*, and *Death*, represented the *Four Spirits of Heaven*, and are the same with the *Four Winds* (compare the Places beforementioned in *Zechar.*) then these were held in, or stay'd, till the *Servants of God* were sealed, see Chap. vii. 1—4. *i. e.* till those among the *Jews*, who had embraced the *Christian Faith*, had been taken Care of by Providence. This was what *Christ* foretold, see *Matth.* xxiv. 31. And this, I think, is agreed by all, was the Case of the *Jewish Believers*, who, when *Cestius Gallus* unexpectedly raised the *Siege of Jerusalem* (when he might easily have taken it) had an Opportunity given them to withdraw themselves, according to the Divine Premonition, *Luke* xxi. 20, 21. *Josephus* says at this remarkable Conjunction, “Many of the most eminent of the *Jews* swam away from the City, as from a Ship when it was going to sink.” *Of the War*, B. ii. c. 20. And *Eusebius* writes, that “when those that believed in *Christ* had removed from *Jerusalem*, and when the holy Men had as it were totally relinquished the princely Metropolis of the *Jews*, and the whole Country of *Judæa*; then at length divine Vengeance seized them who had dealt so unjustly with *Christ* and his Apostles, and utterly destroyed that wicked and abominable Generation from among Men.” *E. H. B.*

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iii. c. 5. Let the Reader reject the Application of this History to the Period of the *Seals*, if he perceive it in the least forced and unnatural.

3. The Lamb had not finished his Part until he had opened the *Seven Seals*. At the opening of the seventh Seal, *there was Silence in Heaven about the Space of half an Hour*, Chap. viii. 1. [f]. Which, if I might conjecture, was occasioned by a mental Adoration of the Power and Skill the Lamb had displayed, in the preceding Oeconomy. He had now prevailed indeed to open the Book, and to loose the Seven Seals thereof, and thereby to lay open the Scheme of Providence, touching the *Jewish Nation*, and give a convincing Proof that *Sabbath* was come, by causing the Tribe of *Judah* to exercise Government no longer. If the Com-

[f] As the Division of this Book into *Chapters*, is merely arbitrary, I desire the Reader would conceive this Verse a *Chapter* by itself, and then judge, whether what follows has an immediate Connection to the now opened Book, so as to be read therein, or necessarily to belong thereto. I own my Ignorance; and would gladly receive the better Information of others to discover some intrinsic Character for uniting the *Trumpets* to, or including them within, *this Seal*. The *Silence* that ensued on opening of it, if borrowed from the concluding Scene of Worship in the Temple, seems indeed at present to me, to complete and terminate the Book-Prophecy. As to the Particle, *and*, in the Beginning of the following Verse, *AND I saw the Seven Angels which stood before God, &c.* before that be urged in Objection, I desire it may be considered, whether that Particle is always conjunctive in this Book: As *e. g.* Chap. xii. 1. xiii. 1. xiv. 1. xx. 4. The like Particle abounds in the Books of the *Old Testament* Prophets, where, or I am mistaken, a new Scene or Section of Prophecy often begins.

pletion

pletion of those Prophecies to which *John* was referred, when the *Lamb* was introduced, in order to his *taking the Book out of the Right Hand of him that sat on the Throne*, Chap. v. 5. ought to be regarded in explaining the Visions, which attended *John* on the unloosing the Seals; we have a good Rule of Interpretation in our Favour. And if these Visions, consequent on the Seals, did indeed relate to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the State of the *Jews*, it will hardly be denied the Force of an internal Proof, that the *Revelation* was written before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*.

Sir *Isaac Newton*, in his *Observations upon the Prophecies*, Part ii. c. 1. besides suggesting several other Reasons for determining the Time of writing the *Apocalypse* before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, particularly propounds this, “ that “ it seems to be alluded to in the Epistles of “ *Peter*, and that to the *Hebrews*, and therefore to have been written before them :” To which I refer the intelligent Reader. Indeed from the wondrous Coincidence of Sentiment in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. xii. 22—25. with the glorious Scene exhibited in St. *John*’s second Vision, I own I have been led to think that the former, is an Allusion to the latter. But as this kind of Proof is not attended with equal Evidence to all considering Persons, I will not insist upon it.

However, whether the Apostles themselves read and studied this Book (as Sir *Isaac Newton* thought) this seems plain, that it was given by

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God for signal Use to the *Christians* of those Times (tho' latter Ages perhaps lost much of its Design with its Date); and that it called their Attention to some very remarkable Stroke of Judgment on the Enemies of *Christ* and his Religion. Let us take only this with us, that the *Coming of the Son of Man to destroy the Jewish Nation*, was the great Subject of Prophecy, and of the last Predictions of *Jesus Christ*; and that in the Accomplishment thereof the *Gentile Christians* were nearly interested, as well because it was the Evidence of the Power of *Jesus Christ*, and the Establishment of his Kingdom; as in Regard of that affectionate Concern they bore for the Welfare of the Churches in *Judæa*, of whom they became Followers, and to the Supply of whose Necessities they had liberally contributed.—I say, let us take only this with us, and if the *Title*, the *Motto*, the *Proem* of a Book will throw any Light on the Use and Import of it to the Time wherein it was written, let the Reader judge of the following Sentiments.

From the *Title*, Chap. i. 1.—“to shew unto his Servants THINGS WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS.”

The *Motto*, ✕ 3. “Blessed is he that readeth, &c. FOR THE TIME IS AT HAND.” The *Proem*, ✕ 7, 8. “Behold, he cometh with Clouds, and every Eye shall see him, and all they which pierced him, and all the Tribes of the Land shall wail because of him: Even so, *Amen*.”

A respectable Divine, known to the learned World for compleating the Paraphrase of that excellent Person Dr. *Sam. Clarke*, on the *New Testament*, was pleased to honour me with his Sentiments with Respect to Sir *Isaac Newton's* early Date of the *Apocalypse*, which I will make free to transcribe, as they contain, besides the Sum of almost all I have said on this Head, a fine Reflection.—“ A Circumstance of Time, “ or Thing, so fortified with Scriptures so favourable, so apposite, and so numerous, as “ those alledged by the great Man, have with me “ much greater Weight than Passages out of “ Fathers, or Decrees of Councils. *Irenæus* was “ a Child in Church History—witness his thinking *Christ* to have lived Fifty Years. And *Eusebius* himself, the far greater Man, was in “ many Things but a mere Collector of what “ others had said or writ—sometimes right, “ often wrong. But let them all have their Due, “ Fathers, Councils, Church—their great *Usefulness* is to have been *Keepers of Holy Writ*. “ And had they not only always KEPT it, but “ KEPT UP TO IT TOO, happier would have “ been the earlier Churches, and happier the modern ones.”——

DISSERTATION III.

*On the MANNER of PROPHETICAL
INSPIRATION.*

IF there is any Part of the *Bible* that has more than ordinary Claim to Divine Inspiration, it is undoubtedly, the Prophetical Writings.

To compile an History, or give a simple Narration of Facts, a tolerable Share of Knowledge and Integrity may be thought sufficient. To compose a Book of moral Reflections, and Precepts, for the Cultivation and Direction of human Life, Experience of the World, and a sagacious penetrating Judgment will go a great way. But to foretel future Events [a], and with some kind of Exactness and Brevity, describe the State and Fortune of Men and Things, for ten, twenty, an hundred, yea a

[a] I would not be understood here, as if I thought Inspiration necessary only to the *Prophecy of Scripture*. For, as an eminent Author observes against the Opinion of *Grotius*, “there remains another Part of Scripture, which
“ is neither *historical*, nor *moral*, nor *prophetic*, and which
“ yet must necessarily be inspired, I mean certain *Do-*
“ *ctrines*, and Commands, or Injunctions, which Reason
“ could not trace out, but which when revealed, appear
“ to be perfectly agreeable to Reason,” *Dr. Sykes’s Princip. and Connect. Nat. and Rev. Relig.* p. 121.

thou-

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thousand Years to come, is a Task beyond all human Ability. Whoever doth this, discovers himself to be therein under the Guidance and Direction of a superior Agent ; and may deserve the Style and Character of a Prophet of the true God.

Revelation is so suitable to the State and Circumstances of Mankind, as well as to the Character of God, *whose Offspring they are*, that we scarce find any Age or Country, but what either has, or pretends to have, some supernatural Discovery of his Will for the Rule of their Faith and Manners. And it must be confessed, to be a desirable Thing for the Bulk of Mankind to have some such Directions and Notices of their Duty and Danger from God, that might serve as additional Arguments and Motives to their Virtue and Happiness, and afford them a Proof of his superintending Providence over them.

This both *Jews* and *Christians* assert, that God hath done. *At sundry Times, and in divers Manners, he spake in Time past, unto the Fathers, by the Prophets ; and last of all he spake unto us, by his Son.*

As we converse with, and derive our first Knowledge of Things by the Mediation of our Senses, it is probable the Method or Manner of prophetic Inspiration is either by working on them, or analogous thereto. It is not likely, that God should establish a Law, or Order for us whereby to collect Ideas, which he does not also observe in communicating of them

to

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to us. 'Tis true, he may excite Ideas, and may inspire a Train of Sentiments, in any one, we know not how. No Absurdity, no Impossibility lies against this. But the Question is, as to prophetic Matters, whether he does make any Communication otherwise than by the Organs of Sense? The settling this Point will go a great way to obviate another Difficulty, namely, How to distinguish what is called *the Hand of God* [b], or the Impressions of his Presence and Power, from the Workings of the human Mind; or, how a Person, in a Case so rare and uncommon as this of prophetic Inspiration is, may satisfy himself and others, by what Spirit and Principle he is actuated?

As all God's Gifts are worthy of himself, so no Doubt but they have peculiar Marks whereby they may be discerned, and known to come from him; especially this of Prophecy, which can have no Claim to the Regard of any Person, but as it has, or is attended with Characters, legible and strong, of its supernatural Source and Original.

By *Prophecy* here, I mean, that which is strictly so called, whereby Secrets that are impenetrable by human Sagacity are revealed, or a Description is given of future Events.

Now this Gift was imparted either by *Dream* or by *Vision*. There is, according to *Maimonides*, no third Degree of Prophecy, besides these two. And it seems to be a ruled Case: *If there*

[b] For this Expression comp. 1 *Kin.* xviii. 46. 2 *Kin.* iii. 15. with *Ezek.* i. 3. xxxvii. 1.

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be a Prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream. My Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine House. With him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches; and the Similitude of the Lord shall he [c] behold, Numb. xii. 6, 7, 8. The Way or Manner of Communication seems to be only twofold, *Vision*, and *Dream*. But as one Manner is superior to the other, and as each Manner admits of Degrees in Point of Clearness and Perspicuity, as well as in Point of Nearness and Intimacy with God; the highest Manner, and the highest Degrees of that Manner were the Portion of *Moses*. *With him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, &c. q. d.* “He ever shall receive his Instructions in the wakeful Vision, plain, and clear, “and evident to his Capacity; and shall con-

[c] Bishop *Patrick*, on this Place says, “I am apt to think the Word *not* should be here again repeated, “which will make the Meaning plainly this, He shall “not behold the Lord in Similitudes and Resemblances.” And the Reverend and Learned Mr. *Chandler*, in his Dissertation on *Joel*, saith, “this Interpretation I greatly “prefer.” I am sensible it becomes not me to oppose such Authorities. But yet, with Submission, how is it possible *Moses* should behold *Jehovah*, but in or by a Similitude? *No Man hath seen God at any Time*; no, not even *Moses*, how singular and extraordinary soever any real Appearance to him was. God did not, indeed, speak unto him in Dreams, and Night Visions, dark Speeches and Parables; but always in a more clear and distinct and familiar Manner. But still it was but apparently, and by the Similitude of himself.

“ verse

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“ verse with the brightest Likeness of my
 “ Glory.” And thus distinguished was *Moses*
 from all other of the *Jewish* Prophets. For,
 whilst many of their Inspirations were in
Dreams, *Moses* received all his Instructions
 from God *awake*. Whilst God appeared to
 them but rarely, and then, perhaps, by an *An-
 gel*; *Moses* was familiar with his more *glorious
 Likeness*, which was always, or almost always,
 accessible to him; so that he conversed with
 God *Face to Face*; ever in a near, more inti-
 mate and sociable Manner than others, *even as
 a Man speaketh unto his Friend*, *Exod. xxxiii.*
 11. [d].

That the Night Vision, or Dream, was
 one Method of instructing the Prophets, is
 clear from the Sacred Books. *Job* iv. 13. *In
 Thoughts from the Visions of the Night, when
 deep Sleep falleth on Men, Fear came upon me,
 and Trembling, which made all my Bones to
 shake. Then a Spirit passed before my Face, &c.*
*Chap. xxxiii. 14—17. For God speaketh once,
 yea twice yet: Man perceiveth it not. In a
 Dream, in a Vision of the Night, when deep*

[d] A Difficulty may arise at Ver. 18. of this Chapter.
And he said, I beseech thee shew me thy Glory. If *Moses* was
 familiarly conversant with the *Likeness of the Glory of the
 Lord*, why does he make this Request? To obviate which,
 it is my humble Conjecture, that *Moses* well knew that
 he conversed with God only by a *Similitude* and *Resem-
 blance*; and that here, at this Time, he desired to see his
 more immediate Splendor: Which Request was not,
 could not be granted. *Thou canst not see my Face*, Ver. 20.

Sleep

Sleep falleth upon Men, in Slumbrings upon the Bed : Then he openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instruction, &c. And tho' as a mere Work of Fancy, a Dream is very contemptible, and affords a fine Image for what has no Foundation or Solidity, as *Job xx. 8. He shall fly away as a Dream, and shall not be found ; yea, he shall be chased away as a Vision of the Night, Isa. xxix. 7. And the Multitude of the Nations that fight against Ariel, shall be as a Dream of a Night Vision :* I say, tho' the Sacred Books themselves treat a Dream, as it is merely the Creature of Fancy, with a kind of Contempt ; yet have the Powers of Imagination, in Dreams, been sometimes so directed, or impressed, as to give Notice of very important interesting Events ; yea, even to collect a Sketch of the Empire of the World, from a present to distant Ages ; and, in short, to produce such *Phænomena* as to puzzle and perplex the wisest Men to account for, on any Principles, but those of Revelation.

But the *wakeful Vision*, is, what I propose chiefly to treat on : That high Degree of Instruction, in which, by means of apt Similitudes, strong and vigorous Representations, the Prophets were made conversant as it were with the very things themselves ; and wherein they were not surprized, but were their own Masters, and conscious of their own Agency. This was that which *Balaam* seemed not a little to have prided himself in, *Numb. xxiv. 3, 4. And he took up his Parable, and said, Balaam the Son of Beor*

bath said, and the Man whose Eyes are open, bath said: He bath said, which heard the Words of God, which saw the Vision of the Almighty, falling into a Trance, but having his Eyes open.

But, previous to our main Design, it may be worth while to note somewhat of the Nature of Vision in general, or the Act of Seeing: “ which is a Sensation in the Brain, proceeding
“ from a due and various Motion of the optic
“ Nerve, produced in the Bottom of the Eye,
“ by the Rays of Light coming from any Object ; by which Means the Soul perceives the
“ illuminated Thing, together with its Quantity, Quality, and Modification.” By this Definition, as the Eye goeth not forth to the Object, if an Image is cast on the Retina of the Eye, or is impressed on the Sensory, whether the Object is material or immaterial, it is strictly and properly *visible* to the Soul. And the like may be said of the Sense of *Hearing*. If the auditory Nerves, or any more subtile Medium therein be put into a Tremor, so that the Brain be impressed, whether the Motion come from the external Air or not, the Soul perceives what is called *Sound*. This I mention, as well to shew how easy this kind of Converse may be effected by God ; as, because these two Senses go often together, what is called *Prophetic Vision* being frequently introduced by, and attended with a *Voice*.

From the Nature of Vision in general, I pass to observe the following Particulars ;

1. That,

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I. That in, and under the Cover of various Images, and artificial Representations, God was pleased usually to signify supernatural and divine Truths, to his Servants the Prophets. Thus he condescended to assure *Abraham* of his Faithfulness to fulfil his Promise, by ratifying the Covenant with him, when, according to the solemn Custom of the Country, observed by the Party who swore, he, *by a smoking Furnace, and a Lamp of Fire, passed between the Pieces of the divided Animals*, Gen. xv. 17. *Moses* also was instructed with respect to the suffering State of *Israel*, and their Deliverance, by *Fire out of the Midst of a Bush*, Exod. iii. 2. When the Word of the Lord came unto *Jeremiah*, to shew the speedy Performance thereof, in his Judgments against *Jerusalem*, and the Cities of *Judah*, he saw a *Rod of an Almond Tree*, and a *Seething Pot*, Chap. i. 11, 13. *Ezekiel* was set down in the Midst of the *Valley of dry Bones*, to behold under them the Reviviscence of *Israel*, Chap. xxxvii. 1. *Amos* hath given a curious Account of the Manner of his Inspiration by Vision, tho' the prophetical Sermons which he delivered to the People at *Bethel*, in Consequence thereof, are, I think, omitted, Chap. vii. 1. Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me, and behold, he formed *Grasshoppers*, &c. See also *ſ* 4, 7. and Chap. viii. 1. *Zechariah* was instructed by the Sight of *Horses*, *Horns*, a *Flying Roll*, a *Woman in an Ephra*, &c. Chap. i. 7—18. iv. 2—11. v. 1—5. Many are the Examples in the Book of *Daniel*, to whom Mat-

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ters of high Importance, Monarchies, and even sacred and divine Personages, were represented under Images of brutal, human, or angelic Forms.

But besides these Appearances, the Prophets had Understanding in *the Visions of God himself*. Some sensible Manifestation of his *Presence* in a lucid glorious Body, was often made in the Infant State [*d*] of the World, *Gen.* iii. 8. iv. 6. v. 22. vi. 9—13. And the Patriarchs, after the Flood, saw also *the God of Glory*, *Gen.* xii. 1. xvi. 13. xviii. 1. xxvi. 2. xxxv. 9. Nor was this Scene among the *Jewish* Prophets intirely confined to *Moses*, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 5. *Zechariah* had Understanding in the Visions, *Marg. in the Seeing of God*. The Similitude of God, seated on

[*d*] A noble Writer has attempted to shew, that God in an human Shape had a visible fixed Residence in the World, during this Period; *Essay on the several Dispens.* N^o. ii. *Dissert.* And I find many respectable Divines of Opinion, in order to clear the Difficulties of the Sacred Text, or that press their respective Hypothesis, either that the second Person of the Trinity, the *Logos*, or the pre-existent human Soul of the *Messiah*, appeared in an human Form, in the *Old Testament*; and that it was he who conversed with *Abraham*, wrestled with *Jacob*, was familiar with *Moses*, gave the Law from *Mount Sinai*, &c. and this, I think, is said to be the Judgment of the ancient *Jewish* Church, as well as of the *Christian* Fathers. But perhaps the Consideration of the particular Circumstances of some prophetical Visions, wherein the lively apparent Images and Similitudes of Persons and Things are presented, will render less plausible and necessary those Notions, of a real literal Residence and Appearance of *God*, or *Christ* upon Earth before his Incarnation.

some

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some Throne of Government or Glory, was a Sight exhibited to many of them. Where this noble Device was, the Scheme often required the Appearance of other Images, or personalized Subjects, either to attend on, or to act their respective Parts in the Sacred Presence. We have MICAH describing this fine Scene, to the Kings of *Israel* and *Judah*, 1 *Kings* xxii. 19—23. *I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him, on his Right Hand, and on his Left. And the Lord said, Who shall perswade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? And one said on this Manner, and another said on that Manner. And there came forth a Spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will perswade him, &c.* The like Scene is evidently hinted at, or alluded to, in the Book of *Job*, Chap. i. 6. ii. 1. *Isaiab* also saw this glorious Appearance of divine Majesty, with his Train and Equipage, Ch. vi. 1. *In the Year that King Uzziab died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and his Train filled the Temple. Above it stood the Seraphims: each one had six Wings; with Twain he covered his Face, with Twain he covered his Feet, and with Twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory. And the Posts of the Door moved at the Voice of him that cried, and the House was filled with Smoak.* See also *Ezek.* i. 1, 28. *Dan.* vii. 9, 10. Nor was this grand Scheme of Instruction peculiar to the old Prophets.

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phets. St *Stephen*, when he was brought before the Council, and reviled there, had, for his Support, the like Vision of the Majesty of God in Heaven, *Acts* vii. 55. *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the Right Hand of God.* St. *John* also beheld the magnificent Throne of God, and the Lamb standing thereon and acting his Part, surrounded with a Variety of personalized Subjects, respectively employed agreeable to their different Characters, and the noble Instructions and End of the Vision. A late Writer [e] not knowing, or not duly considering any thing of prophetic Schemes, their artificial Nature and moral Use, has sadly exposed himself instead of the *Jewish* and *Christian* Theology.

2. The most part of the Objects presented, or *Things seen*, were hieroglyphical, or symbolical. *i. e.* they were to stand, not for themselves, nor for Beings, Persons, and Things exactly of their Form, and Figure, and Circumstances; but for Beings, Persons, or Things, whose Attributes and Qualities might, as far as the Subject required, be aptly expressed by them. Thus *Gabriel* tells *Daniel*, *The Ram which thou sawest, having two Horns, are, i. e. represent, the Kings of Media and Persia*, Chap. viii. 20. And St. *John* was instructed in the Mystery of this, *Rev.* i. 20. *The Seven Stars are, i. e. represent, the Angels of the Seven Churches; and the Seven*

[e] Mr. Chubb. See his *Four Dissertations*, p. 18.

Candlesticks, which thou sawest are, i. e. represent, the Seven Churches. There was always some Fitness or Aptitude in the Things seen, to express the Things represented by them. Indeed in some Cases this was so very apparent, as to need little Explanation. Of this kind was the Vision which appeared to *Paul* in the Night at *Troas*, of a Man, probably, in the *Macedonian* Habit, who prayed to him for Help: which made him and his Companions, *immediately endeavour to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering, that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them, Acts xvi. 9, 10.*

3. This Manner of Instruction is very comprehensive and emphatical, containing a great deal of Matter under a few Characters, and signifying that, by a Figure or Representation, which could not be easily, nor properly expressed without a great many Words. To comprehend Persons and Things, as well as to conceal them from the common and ordinary Sight of dull, inattentive Readers, is one great Use of Hieroglyphics and Images, in the Prophetical Books. And, in respect to this, the *ancient Mysteries* seem to agree with prophetic Vision: Probably they were an Imitation thereof: For the *Pagan* Theologers and Mystagogues were wont to represent all moral and divine Truths by Symbols, and hieroglyphical Characters.

4. Tho' the Inspiration created, or occasioned a new Scene, or presented new Images to the Eye, or Mind of the enlightened Person, this was done without eradicating the Passions, or disturb-

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disturbing the superior Faculties, which were always affected by, and employed on, the Objects, in the same natural Manner, as if they were really existent material Things. This may be exemplified in the Case of *Moses*, who, when *he looked, and behold, the Bush burned with Fire, and the Bush was not consumed; said, I will now turn aside, and see this great Sight, why the Bush is not burnt, Exod. iii. 3.* His Admiration and Curiosity were raised. So when *Belshazzzer* saw Part of a Man's Hand, writing on the Plaster of the Wall, *his Countenance changed, and his Thoughts troubled him, and his Knees smote one against the other, Dan. v. 5, 6.* It occasioned the same Degree of Fear and Horror to him, as if the Hand, writing those Words on the Wall, was real, and seen by all. So in *St. Peter's* Vision, the Voice which spake unto him, at a time when he was an hungry, *Rise, Peter, kill and eat, Acts x. 13.* had the same Effect upon his religious Temper, and met the Prejudices of his Education, just as if the whole Affair had been a real Performance. Many Instances might be collected, wherein Hope and Fear, Joy and Sorrow, and all the Passions and Affections have been occasionally excited, and the Mind as rationally and properly exercised in [*f*], or by a Vision, as by Objects and Facts, real and na-

[*e*] To put this Matter out of Doubt, let the Reader please to inform himself from *Gen. xv.*—that those Transactions which gave Rise to the Faith of *Abraham*, which is justly celebrated both in the *Old New and Testament*—*And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for*
tural.

tural. This is a Consideration of some Weight and Moment, and sheweth the Dignity of this kind of Inspiration. The Visions of the true Prophets would never have sunk into Contempt, as they have done among many, if the manner of them, as connatural to the human Faculties, had been well attended to, although designing Knaves, and religious Madmen, might have pretended to the like Favour from God. But

5. From the Exhibition of Imagery, and the Instruction of the Prophets in this way, the Character of *Seers* seems to have been applied to them.

1 Sam. ix. 9. *Before-time in Israel, when a Man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the SEER: For he that is now called a Prophet, was before-time called a SEER.*

See also Isa. xxx. 10. *Which say to the SEERS, See not. Elijah* (whether he saw God under any Form or Representation or not) perceived a great Commotion in the Air and Earth, *saw a Fire*, and then heard a *small still Voice, speaking unto him*, 1 Kings xix. 9—14. When the Word of the Lord came expressly unto *Ezekiel*, by the River *Chebar*, and the Energy of a Prophetic Spirit was upon him, *I looked*, says he, *and behold, a Whirlwind*, Chap. i. 3, 4. The Word of God came to him with an *Apparatus*, a sensible Representation. Hence the Prophecy of *Amos*, is said to be, *the Words which he SAW*.

Righteousness—were in a Vision. In like Manner also was *Saul* called upon; and, by being obedient to the *Heavenly Vision*, he became a *Christian*, and an *Apostle of Jesus Christ*.

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concerning *Israel*, Chap. i. 1. See also *Isa.* ii. 1. This was a Method so common and usual with God, to put the Prophets into Commission, and to inform them of divine and supernatural Truths, in and under the Cover of Images, and the Semblance of natural and supernatural Things, that it was not only *Night* where this *prophetical Sun* appeared not, *Mic.* iii. 6, 7. but it became a Mark of the foolish or lying Prophets, that *they follow their own Spirit*, AND HAVE SEEN NOTHING, *Ezek.* xiii. 3.

6. We have Reason to think, that (if some things relating to prophetical Men, recorded after an historical Manner, were not scenical, and transacted in Vision, [g]) the Prophets conceived their Notions of supernatural Truths by Vision and Imagery, even where they give no particular Description of the Things *seen*.

[g] Such as *Jacob's* Wrestling with an *Angel*, *Gen.* xxxii. 24. *Balaam's* Discourse with his *Ass*, *Numb.* xxii. 28, 29, 30. *Joshua's* meeting the *Captain of the Lord's Host*, *Jos.* v. 13, 14. *Isaiah's* walking *naked and barefoot three Years*, Chap. xx. 3. *Hosea's* marrying with a *common Harlot*, *Hos.* i. 2, 3. and many other such like Instances. I dare not affirm, that the *Command to Abraham*, and his *Offering up of Isaac*, as also the *Temptations of Christ in the Wilderness*, were of this kind: But I may say, in the Words of a judicious Divine of the last Age, that "in the Recitals of prophetical Visions, we find many times things less coherent than can agree to a true History;" and that, "at other times we meet with things graphically described with all the circumstantial Pomp of the Business, when yet it could be nothing else but a dramatical thing," Vid. *Mr. Smith's Select Discourses*, No. vi.

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The prophetic Rapture of *David*, expressed *Psal. cx. 1. The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my Right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool*; discovers somewhat of this kind. Probably he had often seen *the Likeness of the Glory of the Lord*, in Vision, that *Presence* of which he often speaks, *Psal. xvi. 11. xvii. 2, 15.* and might behold the Honours decreed for his Son and Successor, at the Right Hand of the Sacred Personage. However, we are certain, *the God of Glory appeared*, even where no such Appearance is explicitly mentioned by the Historian, *Comp. Gen. xii. 1. with Acts vii. 2.* And it seems, the Words, which the Prophets dropped in Consequence of the Visions, are very often recorded, when the Visions themselves, or *the Things* in and by which God *shewed them their Message*, are omitted. We have *the Book of the Vision of Nabum*, and *the Burden which Habakkuk the Prophet did see*; yet the Imagery, which in the latter is perhaps as bold, awful, and pompous as any in the *Bible*, we are in a great measure left to collect ourselves. The Prophet *Isaiah* gives us very plain Hints of some Appearances he saw, descriptive of the Person and Character of the *Messiah*, *Chap. lii. 14. His Visage was so marred more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of Men. Chap. liii. 7. He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his Mouth.* The Images, which the Hand of God had raised, and whereby the Prophet took in his Concep-

tions of our suffering Lord, seem to have been those very sensible Representations which he has as it were again drawn with his Pen. And this accounteth for the particular Style of Prophecy; *a dark, emblematical, enigmatical, symbolical, parabolical, and figurative Style* [b]; as one is pleased thus to enumerate the Epithets together. 'Tis a Language consonant and agreeable to the Manner in which the Prophets are *taught of God*. God represented himself, and spiritual Things [i], to their Capacities and Understandings by the Appearance, or seeming Appearance, of visible Objects; which, when they came to utter, made their Speech, and their Writings, dark and obscure, especially to the Vulgar, *Ezek. xx. 49. Ah Lord God, they say of me, Doth he not speak Parables?* And this also accounteth for the *Tense* wherein the Prophets oft express themselves, speaking of future Things as if they were past, or present before them. Thus *Isaiab* of *Christ*, *he was, and he is*, so and so. The Description looks as if it were of the historical kind. Wherefore I conclude, that when the Prophets do not take any particular Notice of

[b] *The Scheme of Literal Prophecy*. This able Author says, speaking of the Book of *Daniel*, "The way of representing large Scenes of Affairs by such Images and Symbols as are used therein, is entirely unlike the Books of the other Prophets and the Books of the *Old Testament*, and is agreeable to the Turn of Writing the *Jews* took up with, when they had been new formed in the *Schools of the Greeks*," p. 157. a Passage sure that discovers some Rashness, or Inattention.

[i] *Pascoe on Hof. xii. 10.*

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Examples or Patterns, and write explicitly, as St. *John* was commanded to do, *the Things they have seen*; we are not to infer, that they saw nothing; but that, what they saw was not necessary to the unravelling the Prophecy.

From all that has been said, one may be assisted to form some Answer to the following Questions: As 1. *Can an inspired Person be certain of his Instructions?* Answer. Yes, he may be as certain as he is of what he *sees* and *hears*: Those Senses being his Security, so far as they may be depended upon, that he is under no Delusion. 2. *Can he be certain of the Agency of some supernatural Being with him, or upon him?* Answer. A Person truly inspired may be certain thereof. I grant indeed, a crazy distempered Person may fancy he sees and hears a thousand things that are the Effects of his Disorder. And if such an one should act the Prophet, tell strange Things, and denounce Judgments in the Name of the Lord; he should have the same Regard paid to him, as if he were to act the General, or the King, *i. e.* be taken proper Care of, as a distempered Person. But if the Prophet be a sober Man (as I suppose all Prophets to be) he may be certain of several particular Circumstances, besides those of *Time, Place, Business, Company, &c.* when the Hand of God came upon him: For he must be certain of that Surprise, which the sudden Change of Objects, their Novelty, Form, or Grandeur must occasion. This indeed he may sensibly feel by the Hurry and Waste of his animal Spirits,

rits, by the Joy or Sorrow, and other like Affections and Emotions of his Body and Mind, the Effects of which may continue upon him for some Time, as is usual to a Person in some great or sudden Surprise, in the ordinary way. To this Purpose *Isaiah* describes the Effects of a grievous Vision, *Chap. xxi. 3. Therefore are my Loins filled with Pain; Pangs have taken hold upon me, as the Pangs of a Woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing, I was dismayed at the seeing. My Heart panted, Fearfulness affrighted me: The Night of my Pleasure hath he turned into Fear unto me.* See also *Dan. x. 7, 8, 16, 17.* And he may also be certain, that what has occurred to him, or what he was *caused to see*, was extraordinary and supernatural. For (besides that the Objects were often rare and uncommon, or of such a peculiar Form and Figure, as exists no where in Nature;) when the Prophet finds the Scene is suddenly changed; that the Objects, Persons, and Things he had just been conversant with, are withdrawn, he must find that they could not arise from, and belong to the Place. Thus he may be certain of some superior Agency. 3. *Can he be certain that the Vision is of God, and not the Work of some other, or evil Being?* To this, I answer; Perhaps the Prophet at first cannot tell any more than a Person, who, when he first sees another, knows who or what he is. *Samuel*, at first, *knew not the Voice of God*, 1 *Sam. iii.* What then? Inspired Persons were not always easy and credulous. *Abraham* requires a Sign, and
one

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One Vision is succeeded and confirmed by another, *Gen. xv.* When the Vision related to something improbable, or incredible, they desired farther Satisfaction by some Token or other. *Who am I, says Moses, that I should go unto Pharaoh, that I should bring the Children of Israel out of Egypt? They will say, "The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine Hand? And he said, A Rod. And he said, Cast it on the Ground; and he cast it on the Ground, and it became a Serpent: And Moses fled from before it, &c. Exod. iii. 11, 12. iv. 1—6.* When the Lord appeared unto Gideon, and sent him to save Israel from the Hand of the Midianites; Gideon said unto him, *If now I have found Grace in thy Sight, then shew me a SIGN that thou talkest with me.* Which Request was granted: *There rose up Fire out of the Rock, and consumed the Flesh and the unleavened Cakes which he had brought forth for a Meat Offering, Judg. vi. 14—22.* And thus, Manoah and his Wife seem to have been acquainted with the Truth and Certainty of what was promised them, by seeing the wondrous Ascent towards Heaven, of the Person who had conversed with them (and whom, till then, they took to be a Man, possibly that might have imposed on them) *in the Flame of their Burnt Offering from off the Altar, Chap. xiii. 17—21.* Without waiting for the Event to verify the Prediction, they knew, at that Instant, that there was no human Juggle and Contrivance in the Case. And Zacharias said

said unto the Angel, who appeared to him, and promised him a Son, *Whereby shall I know this ? for I am an old Man, and my Wife well stricken in Years. And the Angel said unto him, Behold, thou shalt be dumb, &c.* Luke i. 12—20. The Prophets had, or might have all the Satisfaction they desired, touching their Principal who employed them, and their Business, that it was not merely imaginary and illusive.

As to the Power of *evil invifible Beings*, to inspire and play Tricks upon Mankind, the World is pretty well satisfied both of them and their Power. The History of *Heathen Oracles*, as well as the *Frauds* that have been discovered of *Christian Monks and Fryars*, have given so just ground for Suspicion, that more than ordinary Evidence must be produced before a prudent Man will assent to Stories of their Agency. Who *beat and bruised St. Anthony*, when he shut himself up in a *Tomb*, I know not : But his personal Conflicts with Devils, as well as Raptures and Visions were so very extraordinary, particularly, when *he saw himself without himself*, that it is pretty evident either himself, or the Writer of his Life [k], relates Falshoods. The Church of *Rome* have always been

[k] *Athanasius*, after relating this Paradox, says, “ St. Paul was rapt up as far as the Third Heaven, and heard unutterable Words : But *Anthony* saw himself going up into the Air, and contended till he was free.” By which, if he meant any thing, I presume it was this, that the *Apostle* came behind the *Monk*, in respect to divine Raptures.

stocked with Visionaries. Where Faith usurps the Throne of Reason, and inordinate Praying, and Fasting, and Castigations of the Body pass for genuine Acts of Piety, no Wonder indeed if in some the animal Spirits are disturbed, and the Fibres of the Brain become impressive and yielding to whatever Images a warm Fancy or guilty Fears may raise. The *French Prophets*, and other Enthusiasts, who pretend to high Degrees of Revelation, may, I believe, be acquitted of holding Correspondence with Spirits of any great Capacity. Their violent Distortions and Agitations of Body, Hums, and See-Saws, are of the artificial and mechanical kind: And by no Events that answer to their Predictions, or by the Things revealed being common, trite, and jejune, if not repugnant to Reason and common Sense; as well as by their Temperature of Body, Party Attachments, and other like Circumstances it may be easily guessed, that the Principles from whence their *Affatus* arise, are low and spurious.

Revelation and Vision may be feigned and imitated: and what with artful Impostors on one hand, and crack-brained Religionists on the other, many have been the Cheats and Delusions of this kind. But as *Chaff* is very distinguishable from *Wheat*, and the Force of *Fire*, and of a *Hammer*, are known by their Effects, so is the *Word of the Lord*, Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.

DISSERTATION IV.

ON THE

L A M B *of* G O D.

THE *Lamb of God* being a select Character with some devotional Writers, and a Subject of frequent Declamation for some both *Popish* and *Protestant* Divines, it cannot be amiss to make it the Subject of a rational Inquiry. And if in so doing we should oppose any Conceit that may be an Occasion of Superstition in the Worship of *Christians*, we hope we shall not be more guilty of Impiety than the good King *Hezekiah* was, when he brake in Pieces the brazen Serpent that *Moses* had made: [for unto those Days the Children of *Israel* did burn Incense to it :] And he called it NEHUSHTAN [a], that is to say, by way of Contempt, mere Brass, a Bauble, a Trifle.

That the *Lamb* on the Throne, in *St. John's Second Vision*, is the true Image and Pattern of the *Lamb of God*, and the Hieroglyphic, or Sacred Character of *Jesus Christ*, admits of no Doubt. The chief Difficulties are, *How came the Title to be appropriated to Jesus Christ?* And

[a] 2 Kings xviii. 4.

with

with what Propriety a Lamb to stand for him?
To clear and account for which, shall be our present Business.

The general Opinion of Divines groundeth this Title, *the Lamb of God*, on some *Institution* in the *Jewish* Religion; and supposeth *Christ* to bear it in *Allusion*, either to the Lamb in the *Paschal* Solemnity, or to the *daily Lambs* that were offered in *Sacrifice* to God.

But to shew the Improbability of accounting for the Origin, and Application of this Character to *Jesus Christ*, by the *Jewish* Ritual, I observe, of the *Paschal* Solemnity, that *the young* (*Marg.* the Son of a Year) whether of *Sheep*, or of *Goats*, were appointed indifferently: *ye shall take it out from the Sheep or from the Goats*, *Exod.* xii. 5. Wherefore, if a *small Beast without Blemish*, either a *Lamb*, or a *Kid*, might, according to the divine Institution, be used indifferently, as the proper Subject of that *Feast*; is it not rash and inconclusive to argue, that, from the *Jews* more general Choice of a *Lamb*, probably, as most easy to be had, therefore *Christ* has that Subject for *his Substitute* and *Representative*? How precarious and uncertain must an Hypothesis be, that is built on the use of *one kind of Animal*, in an *Institution* that was, and might always have been as well solemnized by an *Animal of another kind*?

It is the Opinion of *Dr. Lightfoot*, and some learned Persons after him, that *Jesus Christ* beareth this Character, in *Reference and Allusion to the Lamb of the daily Sacrifice*, upon

whose Head the Sins of the Jews were confessed and laid [b]. To which it may be replied, that the daily Lambs were not *Sin Offerings*, and probably, there was no *laying on of Hands* on them, as Dr. *Lightfoot* himself elsewhere seems to be convinced [c]: Nor do we find any *Confession* of Sins enjoined, as in Sacrifices of a *piacular* kind: These were not *vicarious Substitutions* for Sinners; nor indeed were any of the legal Sacrifices such, as the well-disposed Reader may satisfy himself, by a late *Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifices*. These Lambs were *Burnt Offerings*, which, together with *fine Flour*, and *Oil*, and *Wine*, were the *Bread of God*, the daily Provision consumed by Fire on his Table, *Exod.* xxix. 38. *Numb.* xxviii. 2. A Lamb every Morning and Evening, was dressed for, and supposed to be as it were *eaten* by God [d], who was pleased to represent himself as keeping House with, and being resident amongst his People the *Jews*. This being so, is it at all congruous and rational to suppose, that, in Allusion to this his Food, his Son beareth the Character, and is therefore represented as *the Lamb of God*? A Man must have a warm and extravagant Fancy, or a hasty way of judging, that can perceive any Similarity and Connection here.

Should it then be asked, How came *John the Baptist* to point out *Jesus Christ*, personally, twice by this Character? *John* seeth *Jesus*

[b] *Lightfoot's Works*, vol. i. p. 529. [c] *Ibid.* p. 925.

[d] *Cudworth of the Lord's Supper*, p. 86.—90.

coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the World. Again, the next Day after, John stood, and two of his Disciples : And looking upon Jesus, as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God, John i. 29, 35, 36. From whence it may be concluded, the Baptist speaketh of him under a Character familiar to himself or them [f].

To which, by way of Reply, may be observed several things, as

1. That the Baptist was a Prophet of high Rank and Dignity; *Verily I say unto you, among them that are born of Women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist*, Matth. xi. 11. Accordingly he is represented to be, *a Man sent from God*, John i. 6. One who had particular Instructions, and a special Commission. And, by the Records which we have of his preaching, it is remarkable of him, that he conversed much in the prophetic Style, expressing himself, almost always, in bold Metaphors and Figures, both with Regard to the Doctrine he delivered, and the Testimony he gave of *Christ* ; and moreover we are assured,

[f] The sacrificial Phrase, that *taketh away the Sin of the World*, being here added, might probably occasion the Generality of Divines to affix primarily the Notion of a Sacrifice to the Lamb of God ; and to account from Sacrifices for *Jesus Christ's* having the animal Epithet of a Lamb given unto him. But that Reasoning must needs be defective ; since the Law will warrant the Application of that Phrase, *to take, or bear away Sin*, to Persons, and to Things also that are not Sacrifices. See *Essay on Sacrifices*, p. 145, 147.

that

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that he spake many things in his *Exhortation unto the People*, which are omitted, *Luke iii. 18*

2. That a *Lamb* is supposed to bear all the Characters of oppressed Innocence, in the *Apologue*, or Moral Fable; and that it was made in the *Visions of Isaiab*, the descriptive Image of the Meekness and Patience of the *Messiah*, under his Sufferings. *He was led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his Mouth, Isa. liii.*

7. Under this Similitude therefore *Christ* was long foretold. Add to this,

3. The high Probability that all the *Baptist's* prophetical Knowledge of the Person, the Qualifications, and the Design of the Coming of *Christ* into the World, was revealed to him in *Vision*. See the *Third Dissertation concerning the Manner of Prophetical Inspiration*. The *Baptist*, tho' related to *Jesus* by the Mother's Side, declares himself either absolutely ignorant of his being the *Messiah*; or else, that it was a matter of Doubt with him, so that he never certainly knew nor acknowledged him to be *the Person*, till such time as a supernatural Glory drew the Marks whereby he was to distinguish him. *I knew him not: But he that sent me to baptize with Water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, John i. 33.* *John the Baptist* had some kind of Intercourse and Communication with his Principal. And if *the Word of God*, whereby he was led into an Acquaintance

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ance with his proper Work and Business, *came unto him* [b], in the same Way and Manner, by sensible Representations and apt Similitudes, as it did to all the Prophets of Eminence, which I think cannot well be doubted, the Difficulty of accounting for his Application of this Epithet to *Jesus*, *Behold the Lamb of God*, at once subsides. If, under this sacred Device, the *Baptist* first received his Instructions, touching the Character and Qualifications of *Christ*; and had this supernatural Image and Impression on his Mind, revived at the Presentment of *Jesus* to him, to be *baptized*, with a *Glory hovering over him*—there will be, as well an Harmony in the Evangelical Accounts, as a plain natural Reason for his appropriating this Character to *Jesus*, *Behold the Lamb of God*.

But that the Origin of this Character is to be sought for among the *first Principles* of *Inspiration* itself, rather than in the ceremonial Institutions of the *Jewish Law*, will further appear when we consider, the *particular Formation* of it, as it was exhibited in Vision. *I beheld*, saith *St. John*, *and lo, in the Midst of the Throne, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven Horns and seven Eyes*.

From hence it is plain, that, tho' this *Hieroglyphic*, from its *general Likeness*, bears the Denomination of a *Lamb* (as the general Likeness of the *Cherub*, gave it that of an *Ox*, *Ezek. i. 10. x. 14.*) it was a *Lamb* of a very extraordi-

[b] *Luke* iii. 2.

nary and peculiar Form ; and not the Image of any natural Production. It was quite of another Fashion and Form, than those prescribed by the Levitical Law. For tho' it did bear some Marks of Violence about it, appearing *as it had been slain*, it was quite different, and distinguished from the common Animals of that Species, *having seven Horns, and seven Eyes*.

Now a Lamb of this Quality and Condition would, I humbly apprehend, be rejected as a *blemished* Beast, by the Law of *Moses*. *Either a Bullock, or a Lamb, that hath any thing SUPERFLUOUS, or lacking in his Parts, that mayest thou offer for a Free-will Offering ; but for a Vow it shall not be accepted*, Lev. xxii. 23. *i. e.* as the *Jews* understand it, it might be given to the Priest for some sacred Use, to be sold, for Instance [*i*], for the Reparation of the Temple ; but for a Sacrifice to God it would not be accepted. Mr. *Ainsworth* saith, that by *perfect*, and without *Blemish*, which the Law required, “ is meant, to have neither Want, nor Superfluity of Members. And that all Overplus was “ as a Want.” *Vid. on Exod. xii. 5. Lev. xxii. 21.* As then *the Lamb of God*, in *Vision*, has more Parts or Members than it should have, for a *Jewish Feast* or *Sacrifice*, we must leave their Ritual, and seek its original and true Design alone in the prophetic Manner of Instruction.

The *Horn*, in ancient Writers, especially the sacred, signifies Strength and Excellence, *Deut.*

[*i*] *Patrick* in loc.

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xxxiii. 16, 17. *Let the Blessing come upon the Head of Joseph, and upon the Top of the Head of him that was separated from his Brethren. His Glory is like the Firstling of his Bullock, and his Horns are like the Horns of Unicorns: With them he shall push the People together, to the Ends of the Earth: and they are the Ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the Thousands of Manasseh.* See also 1 Sam. ii. 1. *Psal.* lxxxix. 17, 24.

And the Eye, the Organ of Sight, is expressive of great Knowledge, Care, and Inspection, *Psal.* xxxiv. 15. *The Eyes of the Lord are upon the Righteous.* Seven Eyes, we find, were engraven upon the Stone, that was laid, in a Vision of *Zechariah's*, before *Joshua the Priest*, and *Zerubbabel the Prince*. These Figures on the Stone were hieroglyphical, as well as ornamental, being engraven thereon, in order to represent, *The Eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro thro' the whole Earth,* *Zech.* iv. 10.

The Lamb of God had *seven Horns and seven Eyes*. The Horns issuing forth, one over each Eye, formed an Ornament on the Head of the Lamb, which gave it a Dignity peculiarly remarkable.

The Number of its Horns and Eyes, being sacred, and far exceeding that of other Beasts, who have ordinarily but *two* of each, the Lamb appeared, no less distinguished than well qualified for its symbolical Use, Place, and Station, in Vision.

Q

As

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As those Horns and Eyes, on the Head of the Lamb, are *the Seven Spirits of God*; so, analogically on the Person of *Christ*, a sensible Glory, hovering and lighting upon him, like a *Dove* in its Descent, distinguished him to the Eye of the *Baptist*, and was the like descriptive Emblem, or Character of the *Holy Ghost*, Matth. iii. 16. Mark. i. 10. Luke iii. 22. Whether the *Dove* hath those Properties that will bear a Parallel to the seven Graces of the Spirit, as some learned Men have thought [*k*], may be questioned: But there is no Difficulty with respect to these Symbols of *Horns* and *Eyes*. Their Signification is settled and determined: *They are*, i. e. they stand for, and represent, *the Seven Spirits of God*.

Now, as the Plenitude of the Spirit is hereby denoted, the *Baptist's* Vision of *Christ*, under this Image, of *the Lamb* (supposing that he also had such a *Vision* of him, as well as St. *John*; a Supposition that is natural, and may be granted) will well account for his Expressions (for his I take them to be) of the *Fulness of Grace*, and unlimited *Measure of the Spirit* that was in *Christ*, which was, indeed, part of the *Witness* he bore of him, *John* i. 14, 15, 16. iii. 34.

The *Manner* of prophetic Inspiration by *Vision*, thus affording the Original and Use of this Character, we may, among many things, observe, *The Errors of Superstition*. The Church of *Rome* has one Commodity in its Factory, which

[*k*] See *Lightfoot's Works*, vol. i. p. 485.

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is a sorry Imitation of this Hieroglyphic. These are the *Agnus Dei's*, which are a Sort of waxen Medals, with an Impression of a *Lamb*, carrying the *Banner of the Cross*. These are consecrated by the *Pope*, the first Year of his Pontificate, and every seventh Year after, particularly against the *Jubilee*; and are distributed by him to the *Cardinals* and other dignified Persons, and by the *Master* of his *Wardrobe* to the *Pilgrims* and devout People, as a Sort of Amulet or Charm, “to subdue Sin, “vanquish the *Devil*, and preserve from Dangers both by Sea and Land.” I will not dispute the excellent Virtues, nor the Profit that accrues to the Church, by the Gift and Sale of this Commodity. All I intend to observe is, that this is *not* the Image of the *Lamb of God*; and, so far at least, the People are cheated and imposed on. For, instead of the Lamb which had seven Horns and seven Eyes, they have the Image only of a common Lamb. They withhold from the supernatural Object, that which is its peculiar Mark, Glory, and Excellence; and by a sort of Coronet, which they affix, substitute their own Inventions in the room and stead thereof.

But let not *Papists* have all the Reflection. How little more refined are the Notions of some *Protestants*, who take Emblems, and enigmatical Descriptions, into their devotional Exercises; and think themselves never in the way of spiritual Improvement, but when the *Image*

of the *Lamb of God*, and the [1] *Blood of the Lamb*, are raised in their Minds. Such there are, who mistake Parable and Allegory for Truth; at least, prefer the Similitudes, Figures, and Covers of Things in Prophecy, to the Things themselves, or to the moral Truths and Characters principally intended to be expressed by them. I do not know any more Warrant *Christians* have, to invoke and worship *Jesus Christ* under the Name and Notion of a *Lamb*, than under its *Picture* or *Image*. They who think they have a Precedent for it in this Vision, do either not well know, or not consider the prophetic Schemes of Revelation. For, for the same Reason they may worship God the Father, with the *Anthropomorphites*, under the venerable Notion of an old Man, sitting in the Circle of Majesty in *Heaven*, whose Garment was white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like pure Wool; because *Daniel* beheld this Likeness, and saw that *Thousand thousands ministred unto him, and Ten thousand times Ten thousand stood before him*, Dan. vii. 9, 10. The Scriptures, if we adhere to the Letter of them, which speak of

[1] To glory in a crucified Saviour, when his Character is held in Contempt, and Persecution attends the Profession of his Name; is a noble Instance of *Christian* Faith and Fortitude. And true it is, the Death of *Christ* is improvable at all Times, to ascertain us of the Love of God, and as it is a Motive and Obligation to the Practice of Virtue. But to make a mystical Theology of his Blood and Wounds (with the *Moravian Brethren*) is to corrupt the Gospel, and spread Ignorance and Superstition instead of divine Knowledge in the World.

God's

God's *Soul, Face, Eyes, Ears, &c.* [m] are as clear and plain for one gross Conceit as the other.

One Reason why *Christ* is not in the *second Vision of St. John*, represented by an *human Likeness*, seems to be, that it contains the *imperial Scene*; the DEITY himself is made to appear there in Person, under that Form and Similitude: And therefore it seems necessary, in point of Decorum, that a due Difference and Distinction of those Characters be preserved on one and the same Throne.

Had *Christ* there been represented in the Likeness of his glorious human Form, I know not what Work some warm Imaginations might have made of the Vision. Even as it is, with all the Machinery, enigmatical Characters, and Marks of the dramatical Kind, some are hardly restrained from thinking *St. John* saw the literal

[m] It was once, by many who made no inconsiderable Part of the Church, deemed *impious* to assert, that God was *incorporeal*, and without an *human Form*, Socrat. *E. H. B.* vi. c. 7. What warm Contentions have the Figures, and figurative Expressions of Scripture, been the Occasion of among *Christians*? A melancholy Reflection this! But Metaphor and Allegory strike the Imagination: And it seems, where Reason is summoned to manly Exercise, to improve by abstract and reflex Acts, there are good People who will recoil, and clamour, and declare themselves for *no God*, or for *no Saviour*, but in and with the *Similitudes* by which their little first Conceptions were gathered. Some indeed rest not here, but add their own Figures to those of Revelation; and talk of *God's Blood*, and *Christ's Side-Hole*, in a Manner that, if it does not disgrace Revelation itself, must however nauseate and offend the judicious Hearer.

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Place of *Christ's* glorified Body ; and beheld the real Employment, Worship, and Beatitude of the Saints. But, could I be so happy to cast any thing in their way, for their better Instruction, let such Persons attend to the Apostle *Paul*, who was well acquainted with *Visions and Revelations of the Lord*, and who himself had been *caught up to Paradise*, and to the *third Heaven*, where he *heard unspeakable Words, which it is not lawful*, or in the Power of a Man, perhaps with Justice, to utter : Whose Account of the Matter is this, “ For “ we know in Part, and we prophesy in Part. “ For we see thro’ a Glass, darkly.” *Marg.* in a Riddle. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 9, 12. 2 *Ep.* xii. 1—5.

Wherefore, to conclude. *Things seen*, and *heard*, in *Vision*, are to be attended to with a sober and judicious Mind, and taken with proper Limitations and Restrictions. They are Words written for the *Wise*. And whosoever will attempt to explain them, without a due Use and Exercise of his reasoning Faculties, and a just Regard had to those Truths of Natural Religion which are evidently deducible from the Frame and Constitution of the World, hath *no Manner of Security* against MISTAKE and ERROR.

A P P E N -

APPENDIX.

HAVING seen an *Essay towards ascertaining the Sense of the much-controverted Passage, in St. Peter's Second Epistle, &c.* in which a Species of Prophecy, or Degree of Revelation, is asserted *distinct* from, and *superior* to those of the *Vision* and *Dream*: It is necessary I make a few Remarks thereon, in order farther to support and illustrate what is said in the Third Dissertation. And,

1. The Hypothesis of the learned Author ought not to be disliked merely for its Novelty, or Contrariety to the long received Opinion of what is called, the *Gradus Mosaicus* of Prophecy. For whilst we pace on in the Trammels of the Rabbies and Fathers, no Progress in Knowledge can possibly be made in Theology. And of the Authority of the former, touching this Point, it is justly observed by our Author, "Whatever that may be in the proper Subjects of it, in Subjects of civil or ecclesiastic Custom, yet *this* is quite without the Limits of it, and a modern *Christian* is as fit a Judge of it, as an ancient *Jew*; the Medium of judging to both being the Scriptures

“ ptures of the *Old Testament*, and these
 “ only.” [a] So far we are agreed. However,
 I cannot but think the Passage in *Numb. xii.* is
 against the Notion which he has advanced of
 another Species of Prophecy, or third Degree of
 Revelation, *distinct* from, and *superior* to *Vi-*
sion and *Dream*. For notwithstanding what is
 offered in the *Appendix*, in order to reconcile
 that Passage to an *higher Degree* of Prophecy,
 by supposing, “ these Words must either be re-
 “ strained to the Time of *Moses*, or that Vi-
 “ sion here is not to be taken in the common
 “ Sense in which we use it in *English*, of Vi-
 “ sion *properly so called*, which, indeed, is the
 “ same as the Rabbinical Sense ;” [b] it seems
 not of any Moment.

I humbly think that the Words ought not to
 be restrained to the Time of *Moses* : For tho’ it
 be granted, they will then as well answer the
 Occasion whereon they were spoken ; yet they
 seem to have also a Respect to *future Time*, and
 are so read in our ancient Version, and by the
Chaldee. *If there shall be a Prophet among you,*
I Jehovah, &c. See *Ainsworth in loc.* And the
 Author of the additional Chapter to *Deutero-*
nomy (whoever he was, whether *Samuel*, or
Esdras) seems to have understood them as ex-
 tending to his Time, *Chap. xxxiv. 10.* But as
 the confining these Words to the Age of *Moses*,
 does not prevent a Difficulty that will recur on
 the Scheme advanced in the *Essay*, the learned

[a] Page 188.

[b] Page 178.

Writer proceeds, therefore, “to inquire whether the *Vision* has not sometimes a Sense so lax, as to take *the Word* into it” [c]. I own myself unequal to this Argument so far as it is concerned with the original Signification of Words; and so far, therefore, must leave it to those who are skilled in Languages. However, granting that *Vision* may sometimes have as large a Sense as *Revelation* [d] in general; I observe, that, if it is the Case here, that *the Vision* has a Sense so lax, as to take *the Word* into it as a different Species,—this Passage is not plainly expressive of each distinct Manner and Degree of Prophecy. I make this with a View to another Observation, *viz.* That, upon our Author’s Hypothesis, there is no Scripture Passage expressive of all the Degrees or different Species of prophetical Communication. For there is no one Place wherein Mention is made of a threefold Manner common to the Prophets. In *Hosea*, Chap. xii. 10. *I have also spoken by the Prophets; and I have multiplied Visions, and used Similitudes by the Ministry of the Prophets:* There may be expressed, three Ways of God’s teaching the People by the Instrumentality of the Prophets; but not three Ways of his teaching the Prophets themselves. Besides, nothing is there said of the Dream, which is allowed to be one Species, unless we appropriate *the speaking* thereto, as some have done [e]; or will have the Dream denoted by the *Similitudes*;

[c] Page 179. [d] *Prov.* xxix. 18. [e] *Pococke* in loc.

either of which is too forced and arbitrary to pass with considerate Persons. Now, if there is a threefold Manner, and it be in no one Place expressly mentioned, it should seem very strange, because there are several Places wherein the *Dream* and *Vision* are together clearly and distinctly mentioned, or are alluded to, as if those only were the usual Ways of God's revealing himself to the Prophets. "According to this
 " twofold Way of divine Inspiration, the Prophet *Joel* foretells the Nature of that *prophetic*
 " *Spirit* that should be poured out in the latter Times: And in *Jer.* xiv. 14. we have
 " the false Prophets brought in as endeavouring apishly to imitate the true Prophets of
 " God, in fortifying their Fancies by the Power of Divination, that they might talk of
 " *Dreams* and *Visions*, when they came among the People" [*f*]. See also *Zeck.* x. 2. *The Diviners have seen a Lie, and have told false Dreams.* So that, according to these Examples, any other usual Manner of instructing the Prophets, as different and distinct from the *Dream* and *Vision*, seems to be excluded.

2. In those Instances of Revelations to the Prophets, referred to by our Author [*g*], which I apprehend were the occasion and ground of the Distinction he has made, "in which
 " God is said to *speak*, and the Prophet to *hear*, and which is expressly called *Revelation by the Word of the Lord*:" There is great Rea-

[*f*] *Smith's Select Disc.* p. 181. [*g*] Page 94, 95.

son to think, *the Word* came in, or by, or with a *Vision*. This seems plainly implied in the following Passage, 1 Sam. iii. 1. *The Word of the Lord was precious in those Days: How so? There was no open Vision*. If the original Word here, as we are told, “often signifies *Revelation*” [b]; it is such a Revelation as may be opposed to all private Suggestions, or secret Impulses: The Meaning at least is, the plain express Manner in which God was wont to signify his Mind to his People, by the Ministry of the Prophets, was then very rare. But it revived in *Samuel’s Days*; *Ÿ 21. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh; for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the Lord*. How that was, *Ÿ 10. sheweth. And the Lord came, and stood and called, as at other Times*. Expressions, I think, which denote some visible Presence and Action, as well as Voice, tho’ *Samuel* perceived it not at first. What tho’ there “appear no Traces of any *Vision* or *Dream*,” when what the Lord spake is recited? It does not follow, therefore, that the Prophet received the Revelation in a Manner different from either. If there are no Traces of any Dream or Vision in *the Word of the Lord that came unto Nathan*, as it is delivered to us; it is nevertheless highly probable, the Word of the Lord came unto him in one or other of those two Ways. And it is remarked by the Historian, that *according to all these Words, and according to all this VISION, so did*

Nathan speak unto David, 2 Sam. vii. 17. The like may be presumed, touching *the Word of the Lord, that came unto the Prophet Gad, David's Seer*, 2 Sam. xxiv. 11. His being called *David's Seer*, seems to intimate thus much, that he *saw* things relative to the divine Will, for, or upon the Account of *David*. However that be, in the Execution of that Word of Prophecy there was, indisputably, a proper Vision: *David* himself *saw the Angel of the Lord stand between the Earth and the Heavens, having a drawn Sword in his Hand stretched out over Jerusalem*, 1 Chron. xxi. 16. Probably the same Appearance gave the Word, that attended the Event. As to that Expression, which the Author refers to [i], *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his Ear a Day before Saul came, saying, &c.* 1 Sam. ix. 15. it is singular, and not sufficient, I humbly conceive, to ground a Manner of Revelation upon, *distinct from Dream and Vision*, as a Species of Communication from God *by the Ear only*. The Meaning seems to be, that God told him a Secret; or, as we say, *whispered a thing in his Ear*: Not that his other Senses were unconcerned in receiving the Information from God. To these Scripture Passages, taken chiefly from the *Essay*, I will subjoin *three*, that will farther prove and exemplify my Argument, and are not unworthy the Attention of so learned and considerable a Critic as this Writer appears to be, 1 Kin. xxii. 19. *Hear thou therefore the Word of the Lord*:

[i] Ibid. Not.

I saw

I saw the Lord sitting on his Throne, &c. Obad. i. 1. The Vision of Obadiab. Thus saith the Lord God concerning Edom, We have heard a Rumour from the Lord, &c. Zech. i. 7, 8. Upon the four and twentieth Day of the Eleventh Month,—came the Word of the Lord unto Zechariah the Son of Barachiah, the Son of Iddo the Prophet, saying, I saw by Night and behold a Man riding upon a red Horse, &c.

3. Revelation, therefore, by the Word of God ; as when we read, *the Word of the Lord came* ; or, *the Lord spake*, &c. is not *distinct* from, but of the same Species with either the *Vision* or the *Dream* ; God speaking to the Prophets sometimes in one way, sometimes in the other, *Gen. xv. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 19. Acts ix. 10. Gen. xx. 3, 6. xxxi. 11, 24. xlv. 2. 1 Kings iii. 5. Matth. ii. 12, 22.* What he speaketh in *Vision*, is comprehended under that Species of Communication ; and what he speaketh in *Dream*, under the Species of *Dream*. If it be urged, in Favour of *the Word* by a Voice alone, —that *when Moses was gone into the Tabernacle of the Congregation, to speak with him, i. e. God : Then he heard the Voice of one speaking unto him from off the Mercy-Seat that was upon the Ark of Testimony, from between the two Cherubims, Numb. vii. 89.* it must be considered, that this was the Residence of the *Shechinah* : The Glory of divine Majesty appeared in the Cloud upon the Mercy-Seat, *Lev. xvi. 2.* And tho' I dare not be positive, that the Word of the Lord never came by an audible Voice to
the

the Ear only, yet as in many Instances where the *Word of the Lord* is mentioned, it was attended with some kind of Vision, and was not a mere audible Voice, it seems most reasonable to conclude, that *All* those Places, where That or such like Expressions occur, should be understood as attended with Vision of one kind or another, and should not be made a distinct Species of Revelation, and much less the highest Degree of it. God may indeed cause a real or articulate Voice to reach the Ear, as he may assume or cause to be assumed a Shape visible to the Eye. But whether he has in Fact made Use of the Ears, or whether he has excited Ideas only in the Minds of the Prophets, is the Point to be proved.

4. If Prophecy, *by the Word to the Ear only*, be, according to this Hypothesis, *the highest Degree of Revelation*; it is amazing the Man of God, who prophesied against the Altar at Bethel, to whom *it was said by the Word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no Bread nor drink Water there*;—I say, it is amazing he should be so easily seduced by a Revelation, not only given to another Person, but of another and *inferior Degree*. Can it be supposed that the old Prophet, who heard him recite what kind of Revelation he had, and what his express Orders were, would feign a Revelation from God to contradict it of *a lower Order*? If there be any Difference, one would naturally think he forged that manner or kind that was most sure and authoritative. *He said unto him, I am a Prophet*

phet also as thou art, and an Angel [therefore, according to the learned Writer's own Concession [k], this seems to have been in Vision] *spake unto me by the Word of the Lord, saying, Bring this Man back, &c.* 1 Kings xiii. 17, 18. I think we may be sure, he honoured himself with pretending to at least an equal Degree of Inspiration.

5. But to examine this farther : Suppose there was such a manner of Inspiration, or *Revelation by the Word, to the Ear only*, as is advanced in the *Essay* : It cannot, I think, be so good and sure a way as that of *Vision*. It is not so easy to distinguish, and prove a Communication to be of God, by Sense only, as where the whole Mind is employed and exercised. Where the Medium is only a Voice, and the Ear the only Evidence, there is the utmost Scope for Imposition and Delusion. Many *cunningly devised Fables* might have passed upon the World for *divine Revelations*, if those that come by an articulate Sound, or *to the Ear only*, are the superior more excellent Sort. But if there be another manner of Communication, in which the Prophet may *see*, and *feel*, (to allude to 1 *John* i. 1.) as well as *hear*, I mean, where the Impression is made strong upon his Mind, as in Vision it was, that bids fairest, I think, to be, if not *the more sure Word*, the more sure way of Prophecy.

6. Neither is this supposed *distinct* Manner of Revelation by *the Word*, always more free

[k] Page 94. n.

from

from Obscurity than that of *Dream*, or *Vision*. For, as to what the learned Writer has adopted, from a *Manuscript Explanation of the extraordinary Gifts* [1], that “the *Dream*, and the *Vision*, do in their Nature require Interpretation;”—but “the *Word* needed not this Interpretation, and was subject to no other Obscurity than that of the general Communication of Thoughts among Mankind, of Language itself;”—it seems not just and accurate enough to be applied at large to either Manner in which the Prophets are taught of God. Truth may be communicated by Actions and Things, as well as by Words. We have an Example, I think, to the Point, 1 *Sam.* ix. 27. x. 1. *Samuel said to Saul, Stand thou still a While, that I may shew thee the Word of God. Then Samuel took a Vial of Oil, and poured it upon his Head, and kissed him.* This Ceremony was as plain and expressive as Language itself, that God had chosen him to be the Captain over his Inheritance. If some *Visions* were obscure, others were not, and needed little or no Explanation. And if *Peter* doubted in himself what the *Vision* which he had seen, should mean, *Acts* x. we know the Reason; it was because the Law, and the religious Customs of his Nation were against it. There was no Difficulty in interpreting of *Paul's* Vision at *Troas*, *Acts* xvi. 10. and that which *Cornelius* had, interpreted itself, *Chap.* x. 3, 7. As to what our Author calls, *the Word*, I might turn to innumerable Places

for Examples of Obscurity in the *Old Testament*; in *Isaiab*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*; as also to the Prophecies of *Joel*, *Obadiab*, *Micah*, *Zephaniab*, and *Haggai*; where the Expression is, *The Word of the Lord came to*, or, *Thus saith the Lord*, &c. when, what is spoken is not so clear as “the general Communication of Thoughts among Mankind,” is; and which require Interpretation as well as the *Dream* and *Vision*. I pass over the Words of our incarnate Oracle in the *New Testament*, which were sometimes obscure, and needed Explanation; and will only recommend the Reader to compare our learned Author’s own Account of his *third* Manner and Degree of Revelation, with *St. Paul’s* Account of *Vision*, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 12. and judge, whether a like Obscurity does not seem to be predicated of both. Our Author’s Account is, that the Species of Prophecy, which he has been distinguishing, and advancing into the more sure Word, is but a *Light shining in a dark Place*: And that the enlightning [m] itself, of the Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, which he calls the *dark Place*, “by *St. Peter’s* inspired Interpretation and Explanation of them, was still but like *that of a Candle*.” Can this, then, be a Degree of Revelation different from, and superior to that *glassing of divine Things* (as *Mr. Smith* [n] calls it) *to the Prophets by Hieroglyphics and Emblems*? The Difference between having the *Light of a Can-*

[m] Ibid. p. 157, 158. [n] *Select Disc.* p. 182.

dle in a dark Place, and seeing darkly, I should think is really none at all.

7. But if this learned Writer has made a Distinction where there is no Difference; he seems not to have distinguished where a Difference is, and may be made. For, speaking of the Word of God, “[o] a Species of Prophecy “ distinct from the Vision and the Dream;” he supposes it,—“ not attended with the extatic “ Disorders of them;”—but, “ free from the “ extatic Confusion with which the lower Orders of Prophecy were attended.” This, whether he be aware of it or not, seems to border on the *Rabbinical Reverie*; that “ all that prophesied (*Moses* excepted) either by Dream “ or Vision, their Joints trembled, there remained no Strength in them, and their “ Thoughts were troubled, and the Mind was “ left changed, to understand that which was “ seen” [p]. For a Difference is distinguishable among the Prophets, both in the *Dream* and the *Vision*; no Disorder and Perturbation attending either, but where the Objects were strange or terrible, or the Message and Purport of the *Things seen* were woeful and calamitous. It is absurd, and ought by no means to pass into a Rule, that because *a deep Sleep, and an Horror of great Darknefs fell upon Abraham*, Gen. xv. 12. it was so always with him, and others, in those kinds of prophetical Communication. *Abraham* was then made acquainted with a

[o] Ibid. p. 96. *not. Appen.* p. 188, 189.

[p] *Ainsworth on Gen. xv. 12. Smith's Sel. Disc.* p. 263.
very

very melancholy Affair, namely, *the Affliction that was to befall his Offspring, in a strange Land, for 400 Years.* At other times he appears to have been calm and undisturbed, when he saw, and conversed with God; yea, once, to have had a good Degree of Cheerfulness and Gaiety of Temper, *Chap. xvii. 17.* And as to *Daniel's Vision, Chap. x. 8.* (which *Maimonides* likewise mentions as if it would prove, that in all Visions the Prophets *were afraid, and troubled, and fainted;*) who could behold such a terrible majestic Form, as is there described, without Fear and Astonishment? The Prophets were Men subject to a like violent Motion, or Transport of Passions with ourselves, by a sudden, extraordinary, or awful Appearance, or through the Apprehension of impending Evil. But many prophetic Dreams and Visions are on Record, where it is groundless to think, any Disorder and Confusion attended. Such were those of *Paul at Corinth*, and *Jerusalem*, *Acts xviii. 9. xxiii. 11.* And, I believe, in Cases of what is called, *Revelation by the Word*, which is advanced in the *Essay*, “as the highest Species of Prophecy, *distinct* from those of *Vision* and *Dream*,” there are Instances to be collected where that too was attended with Disorder of Mind, or Perturbation of the Spirits—See *Jer. xxiii. 9. Mine Heart within me is broken, because of the Prophets, all my Bones shake: I am like a drunken Man, and like a Man whom Wine hath overcome; because of the Lord, and because of the Words of his Holiness.*

8. Nor is this learned Writer more happy in another Distinction. According to the *Manuscript Explanation*, which he has adopted, “ The lower Degrees, *Vision* and *Dream*, generally relate to *private Conduct* with regard to the Gospel ; to *private Revelations*, or *instant Events* which should happen in the Church, and not to *Prophecy* as concerned in the *public preaching* of the Gospel and *public Assemblies* of the Church, &c.” [q] I must premise here, that *Vision* and *Dream* do not generally relate to *private Conduct*, in the *Old Testament*. For though there may be some Instances thereof that respect private Persons and their Conduct, yet, the far greater Part are of a *public Nature*, and do absolutely relate to the *Jewish Church* and Nation, or to other People and Kingdoms with them. Such are the Visions of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Zechariah*. I chuse to mention *Daniel* here singly by himself, because that his Revelations, which were all by *Dream* and *Vision*, which are, by the *Essay*, treated as *the lower Degrees* of Prophecy, were esteemed, by the ancient *Jews*, equal “ to those of one of the greatest of the Prophets ;” and, on account of which, they “ believed he conversed with God” [r]. And if we turn to *Vision* and *Dream* under the Gospel : What such relate to, which the Author terms, *private Revelations*, will, I believe for the most Part, appear to be of a *public Nature*,

[q] Page 97.

[r] *Josephus Antiq. B. x. c. 11.*

wherein large Bodies of Men were mediately or immediately interested. The *Dreams* of *Joseph* concerned the Reputation and Life of *Jesus*: The *Vision* which the *Baptist* had at *Jordan*, at the Baptism of *Christ*, qualified him to distinguish and bear Record of him. So by the *Vision* which *Peter*, and *James*, and *John* had, on the holy Mount, they became *Eye-Witnesses* of the Majesty of *Christ*. The *Visions* of *Cornelius*, *Peter* and *Paul*, related to the public Preaching of the Gospel, and the Admission of the *Gentiles* into the Church. And if many of those of *John*, in his Revelations, related to *distant Events*, yet were they also of so public a Concern, as, by the special Authority of *Jesus Christ* himself, to be sent to, and testified among the Churches, for their Instruction and Use.

9. The noblest kind of Inspiration, or highest Degree of Communication from God, was in, or by, or with a Vision. In this eminent Manner was fulfilled the Prediction of *Joel*, Chap. ii. 28. touching the plentiful Effusion of the Spirit of Prophecy, on Persons of all Ranks, in the Dispensation of the Gospel. *When the Day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one Accord in one Place. And suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty Wind, and it filled all the House where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven Tongues, like as of Fire, i.e. a visible and radiant Glory, and it sat upon each of them.*

And

And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, Acts ii. 1—5. To this we may add the Case of *St. Paul*, who, by the Revelation of *Jesus Christ*, made to him in *Vision*, was taught the Gospel which he preached. *Comp. Gal. i. 12. Acts xxvi. 16.* In this special Manner was he made acquainted with the divine Will, both *seeing that Just one, and hearing the Voice of his Mouth, Acts xxii. 14.* And this Manner of Inspiration he urges, as a manifest Proof of his true Apostleship, *2 Cor. xii. 1—6.*

Upon all these Considerations, I am induced to continue my Belief, and declare for the ancient Opinion, that there is no Species of Prophecy, or third Degree of Revelation, *distinct* from, and *superior* to *Vision* and *Dream*.

I conclude with observing: The true Reason why some of the prophetical Writings contain so little of *proper Vision*, or *Traces of Vision* in them; whilst others are *all Vision and Dream*; seems to be this: The former, consist of Prophecies expounded, or preached to the People, in Consequence of what the Prophets had seen: The latter, of pure Prophecies, unexpounded, which were only committed to writing. In the former, the Objects and scenical Transactions are for the most Part avoided, and the Doctrine and moral Instructions are given, which principally concerned the Audience. But in the latter, which were never preached, but only written, the Prophets describe *the Things seen and heard*, just as the several

veral respective Scenes were exhibited to them. Of this last Class, are the Prophecies of *Daniel*, and perhaps some of *Ezekiel's*, and *Zechariah's*, in the *Old Testament*; as also *St. John's* in the *New*. So that the Difference, in the prophetical Writings, is owing, not to a different Species of Communication to the Prophets, but, to the different Manner in which the Prophets have communicated them unto us.

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P R E F A C E.

O U R excellent friend, Mr. Thomas Moore, departed this life on November 5, 1756. We knew, that he had put together some thoughts concerning **OUR SAVIOUR'S AGONY IN THE GARDEN**, which he intended to publish. But we could not tell, in what order his papers were : and feared, that his plan had been left unfinished, as his removal was sudden, having been occasioned by a violent fever, which put an end to his life in a few days. However upon examination it was found, that the whole was compleated ; fair writ, and paged throughout, with the contents also at the begining. So that nothing remained to be done by an edi-

tor, but revising the impression. Nor could there be any reasonable doubt made about the fitness of the publication. The subject is very curious, and has been carefully considered by the inquiring author. If he be, in some parts, chargeable with prolixity, every reader may perceive, it is owing to a desire of being exact, and of placing the argument in a clear light. Mr. Moore is well known by divers tracts, which have been well received by the publick.* He had very little acquaintance with the learned languages. But he had read the best writers of our own, and many useful works of learned foreigners, the ecclesiastical historians, and divers other ancient authors, in English translations. His own writings shew, that he had diligently
read

* *An Essay on the Divine Paternity, or God the Father of Men.* The second Edition of which was made in 1744. *A Discourse concerning the Priesthood of Christ,* published in 1747. *Observations upon the first Vision of St. John,* 1750. *Observations upon the second Vision of St. John,* 1752.

P R E F A C E. v

read the sacred scriptures, and was well acquainted with them. And in every relation of life, as a husband, a parent, a friend, a tradesman, he was an amiable pattern of strict virtue.

O&. 25,
1757.

NATHANIEL LARDNER.

CALEB FLEMING.

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A N
I N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E
N A T U R E and C A U S E S
O F O U R

SAVIOUR'S Agony in the GARDEN.

MAnkind in general were so fallen and sunk in ignorance, sensuality and vice, when Jesus Christ came into the world, that those most excellent doctrines which he preached, repentance, forgiveness of sins, the resurrection, and everlasting life, seemed ineffectual to recover them. Certain it is, that those, and other important truths, tho' coming immediately from the mouth of Jesus himself, were regarded only as dry speculative points, and were of little or no avail to reform and amend the bulk of the Jewish nation. That people had been trained up in the belief, and disciplined to the worship of

the one true God : and by promises made to their fathers, and a series of prophecies, had been taught to expect an extraordinary deliverer from him. But tho' Jesus spake the words of God, and produced credentials of his being that extraordinary person ; yet as he proposed to make them great and happy, only by " turning them every one from his " iniquities ;" and neglected to bring them temporal dominion, and the blessings of this world ; the principal governing part of them would not own him for the Messiah. They despised him, who, in that character, came to erect a kingdom of a moral or spiritual kind, and resolved to put him to death. This was the plain truth of the case. And if his own people, the Jews, treated him thus ; it could not be expected that the Gentiles, who had no such preparatory advantages, should give him, and his gospel, a better reception. This the wisdom of God foresaw : and therefore determined to crown our Saviour's obedience to death, who had no sin of his own to render him liable thereto, with such an exertion of power, as should illustrate, confirm, and render his doctrines efficacious, and be the means of setting up his kingdom in the whole world. Agreeable to this constitution, Jesus submitted to suffer whatever might befall him, in order that he might become " the wisdom of God, and the power " of God," to the salvation of both Jews
and

and Gentiles. Thus was the wonderful scheme of redemption entered upon, and, in every part, effectually carried into execution, by Christ. Thus “ he was wounded for our “ transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities :” and “ bare our sins in his own “ body to the tree, that we being dead to “ sin, should live unto righteousness.” (*Isa.* liii. 5. *1 Pet.* ii. 24.)

This was the final cause, or occasion, of our saviour’s sufferings, *namely*, our recovery from sin. He came into the world, lived and died for us men, and for our salvation. “ He “ gave himself for our sins, that he might “ deliver us from this present evil world, “ according to the will of God and our “ Father.” (*Gal.* i. 4.)

But our business at present is, with the particular, or immediate cause, or causes, of his sufferings in the garden of *Gethsemane*. There were several occasions in his life, whereon it is related, “ he wept,” and discovered great tenderness and sensibility of temper. But we never find him, before this time, distressed, and pierced with so much sorrow. And it is certain, afterwards under all the cruel usage of his enemies, and even excruciating pains of death, he did not express more anguish, or a greater sense of misery. Why he was so deeply oppressed and afflicted, at this juncture, is then a curious

speculation, and may well deserve to be made the subject of our sober and rational inquiry.

But, before we begin, let us take a view of the original account, which the Evangelists give of the fact.

Matt. xxvi. 36. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place, called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, sit you here, while I go and pray yonder.

V. 37. And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful, and very heavy.

V. 38. Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

V. 39. And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

V. 40. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

V. 41. Watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

V. 42. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

V. 43. And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy.

V. 44. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

The persons selected by Jesus, to attend him on this occasion, were *Peter, James, and John*. They who had been eye-witnesses of his glory, when they were with him on the holy mount, had now an opportunity of beholding him in a very heavy and depressed condition. He confesses to them the state of his mind; that he felt the deepest degree of inward sorrow. And he desires their social regard for him. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." He then removed to a small distance, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." There seems a close connection between the deadly sorrow he expressed to the disciples, as the reason why he bespoke their present concern, and that perplexity and distress of mind, he discovered himself to be in, to his Father. These were, probably, the effects of one and the same cause. What excited his grief, excited also his loathing of the cup. He now prays, "O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Did our Lord apprehend, that some other way, for the salvation of mankind, might be obvious to the infinite mind, than that measure of sufferings, that

that he uttered these expressions, "If it be possible, let this cup pass?" If he did not, it is certain, the words imply, at least an ardent desire, and wish, that it were so. But if he discovered, hereby, any share he had of human infirmity, he nevertheless, persevered in piety, and filial obedience, making not his own, but his Father's will, the rule and measure of his duty and submission: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto *Peter*, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? watch, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." Instead of encouraging him by their presence, they had shut their eyes upon him, and forgot both themselves and their duty: so that he found the present hour afforded a trial to them all. Whereupon he makes the following reflection, by way of apology, perhaps both for himself and them: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* We are here to observe, that when he went away again the second time, and prayed, he says, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me."—Wherein he drops the former expressions of reluctance, "if it be possible," varying his words,

as

* "The Words seem rather founded on what our Saviour experienced in his late Agony, than from any thing that was criminal in his Disciples:" Says Bp. *Sherlock. vid. Discourses*, Vol. III. P. 230, 231.

as if he had recovered himself to a degree of strength, and had obtained a clearer apprehension of his Father's will.—“except I drink it.”—This seems to fix and determine the sense, in which he had prayed before, that, “if it were possible, the cup might pass away from him;” *i. e.* so pass away that he *might not* drink it. “O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” And when he went away again, and prayed the third time, he used “the same words.” So that if he twice successively repeated the same prayer, it was this; wherein, with his sense of the evils of the cup, he expressed his full acquiescence and submission.

Mark xiv. 32. And they came to a place, which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, sit you here, while I shall pray.

V. 33. And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy.

V. 34. And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

V. 35. And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed, that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

V. 36. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

V.

V. 37. And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour?

V. 38. Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

V. 39. And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

V. 40. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy) neither wist they what to answer him.

V. 41. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

V. 42. Rise up, let us go: lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

Besides the dejection, deadly sorrow, and grief, mentioned by the former Evangelist, St. Mark says, "Jesus began to be fore-amazed;" denoting great consternation, fear, and anguish of mind, coming upon him. He also gives us first the purport of his prayer; it was, saith he, to this effect, "That, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him." The hour is a like figure of speech with the cup, and of almost the same import. The one implying the affliction itself, the other the time when it was to be undergone. It denotes the afflictions of a special period. The prospect of this afflictive
period

period made an impression on the mind of Jesus, some days before. *John* xii. 27. "Now
 " is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ?
shall I say, " Father, save me from this hour ?
 " But for this cause came I unto this hour."
 There is a necessity to look beyond the affliction of the hour then present. He was almost tempted to pray, then, to be kept from that future period, altho' he came with a design to sustain the evils thereof. However, now, he expresses himself to that purpose ;
 " That, if it were possible, the hour might
 " pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee ;
 " take away this cup from me." Wherefore, in the sense both of our Lord and the Evangelist, the cup, and the hour, are nearly synonymous. " All things are possible unto
 " thee." These are different phrases from what we have in *St. Matthew*. It is probable, his prayers were somewhat larger, than what either of the Evangelists have recited, or than even the three Apostles related ; for, he went but a little farther from them, and, on his return, found them asleep each time. And, this being so, one Evangelist may recite some words, the other, other words, that the Apostles related he spake on the occasion. And both may agree in the meaning and import of his first prayer, that it was to this effect, *viz.* He wished, that, if it were possible, he might be excused from suffering those
 C evils.

evils. " And he said, Abba, Father, all things
 " are possible unto thee, take away this cup
 " from me." Is it not as if he had said, thou
 canst accomplish thine end by other means
 than my enduring these evils ; and I would
 now rather it were so, if thou pleasest? St.
Mark, after reciting this first prayer, and
 what he spake, when he awoke his three
 drowsy disciples, says, that " again he went
 " away, and prayed, and spake the same
 " words ;" intimating thereby, if we take
 that assertion strictly, that he varied neither
 in the matter, nor language, of these his
 prayers, but that they were all one and the
 same, only repeated thrice over.

This cannot be admitted, because in St.
Matthew's account of the two first prayers,
 they evidently differ both in matter and
 phrase. An exact sameness of expression, if
 in any, was in the two last. Wherefore, by
 " the same words," it is probable St. *Mark*
 meant, if St. *Matthew* meant otherwise, those
 words which were expressive of his reve-
 rence, piety, and submission to the divine
 will. " Nevertheless, not what I will, but
 " what thou wilt : " Which bespoke that pious
 temper, which he uniformly maintained,
 throughout all his prayers and sufferings.

Luke xxii. 39. *And he came out, and went,*
as he was wont, to the mount of Olives ; and
his disciples also followed him.

V. 40. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

V. 41. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.

V. 42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.

V. 43. And there appeared an Angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

V. 44. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly : and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

V. 45. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.

V. 46. And he said unto them, why sleep ye ? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

This

* Here a difficulty may occur. How could the three disciples tell what passed, if they slept ? To obviate which, it is probable that they did not fall asleep, before they had seen his posture, and heard so much of his petitions each time, as they related : and that their observation of him, in his agony, gave them some concern of mind, which, added to the heaviness of their eyes, disposed them so readily to forget themselves as they did ; they being found asleep by him each time he came back to them. This will not only reconcile the Evangelists together, where they assign the causes of the drowsiness of the disciples ; two saying, that their eyes were heavy ; one, that they slept for sorrow ; but also serve to account for our Lord's expression to them, the third time, without supposing that he used an irony : " Sleep on now, " and take your rest, &c." *q. d.* since you could not

This Evangelist's account is singular, in several particulars, from the other two. He omits some circumstances, which they mention, and mentions some circumstances, which they omit. It is unnecessary to point them all out. As to the name of the place, he varies in his account, and says, "Jesus went, as he was wont, to the *Mount of Olives*." Now, the *Mount of Olives* was of large extent, lying to the *East* of *Jerusalem*, on the other side of the valley, and brook of *Cedron*. They say, "he came to a place called *Gethsemane*." This was situated on a part of that Mount, being, perhaps, a small village with gardens, to one of which, as we learn from *St. John*, chap. xviii. 1. our Lord now retired. So that, compared together, here is rather illustration, than disagreement. If it be thought, that *St. Luke* differs from the other writers, in describing the posture, which our Lord, on this occasion, used in prayer; it will be
no

bear to see my private distress, how will ye endure to see my public sufferings? But if you will be witnesses of the things that so affected me, it is time you bestirred yourselves; for the hour is come, &c. As to the Angel from heaven, as that appeared unto Jesus only, it is probable the disciples had the knowledge thereof from him, who told them of it, and also of his strength and resolution to meet his sufferings. And it is also probable, that those circumstances were particularly recollected by them, after the Holy Ghost was given, whose work it was, partly, to prevent any material defect in their testimony, arising from their weaknesses, by refreshing their memories. *John* xiv. 26.

no difficulty to reconcile them, by supposing, that he first kneeled down, and then prostrated himself, according to the Eastern manner, with his face to the ground. What I would chiefly observe, on St. *Luke's* account, is, that he omits the circumstances of Jesus taking with him *Peter*, and the two sons of *Zebedee*; and his praying three several times; and relates the distance he was at from the larger number of the Apostles; and what occurred to him, perhaps, only in the first part of his retirement and devotion. "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast;" but not so far from *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, whom he had taken from the rest of the company, and desired they would watch with him. "He prayed, saying, "Father, "if thou be willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." This is related exactly in sense, and exactly almost in words, as the first supplication is related, by the two former Evangelists. The following circumstances, indeed neither of them take any notice of, *viz.* The appearance of an angel to him from heaven, and the bloody sweat. That may be one reason why, by some * over nice catholics, who did not well understand them, they are omitted in some ancient copies. Perhaps it may be needful to inform, or remind the

* Credib. Gof. Hist. 3 vol. p. 143.

the reader, that, by the writers both of the Old and New Testament, the particle *and*, is not always used connectively. Wherefore, these circumstances, which are contained in verse 43, 44, may be read as independent articles. And if in the order of the narration, the agony Jesus was in, the vehemency of his prayer, and the sweating as it were great drops of blood, be last mentioned, it was perhaps to shew the reason for the intervention of the angel, which the Evangelist spake of first. "And there appeared an angel to " him from heaven strengthening him." Whatever the angel was, whether an intelligent being, or a vision, from heaven, (for an angel may signify either,) hereby is intimated to us the great distress, which Jesus was then in. He was weak and faint, through some disorder, or commotion raised in his animal nature. For " being in an agony, he " prayed more earnestly," or with greater vehemence than at other times. " And his " sweat was as it were great drops of blood " falling down to the ground." The anguish and distress, and intense devotion of his mind, had such an effect on his body, as to force a thick viscous matter through the pores of his skin.

This is the account, which three Evangelists give, of the deep distress of Jesus, at this time, in *Gethsemane* : on which we have made a few plain remarks, in order to a clear apprehen-

apprehension, and view, of the whole matter. Tho' these writers may seem to differ in some circumstances, (one relating what another omitted;) two of them affirm, that "Jesus now began to be very heavy;" and "was exceeding sorrowful even unto death." One of them says, "he was sore amazed." And the third says, that "he was in an agony, and did sweat as it were great drops of blood: and," intimating thereby, that he was weak or faint, that "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven strengthening him." And all agree in representing the vehemency and ardour of soul, with which he prayed, with submission, that "the cup might pass, or be removed from him."

Our inquiry now is, whence arose this dejection and deadly sorrow? or what probable causes may be assigned for the great disquietude he expressed?

This being, in a manner, left by the Evangelists to the researches of Christians, different opinions have been given of the matter: some accounting for it by the imputation of sin to the person of Jesus Christ: others by his undergoing the wrath of God, in the place and stead of sinners: others again, by a personal conflict, which they suppose, he had at this time with devils: others by some considerations, which affected his mind, of the odious nature, and fatal effects, of sin, in
the

the moral world: and lastly, others ascribe it to the fear he had, lest he should expire privately, in the garden, and not hold out to triumph, gloriously, over death, on the cross.

As none of these causes, or reasons, appear to be any thing better than mere hypothesis, and conjecture, we will take the liberty to pass them by: and, in order to get at the true cause or causes, we will direct our inquiry in the following method.

We will review the circumstances, through which our Lord passed, previous to this affair.

Consider what those evils were, that might naturally present themselves to his mind, which he expressed under the notion of the cup. And then,

Take some notice of the particular circumstances of time, and place, when this affair happened.

1. We are first to review the circumstances, through which our Lord passed, previous to this affair. And here we have to observe, that the work he went through, the five preceding days, was so great, and of such a nature, that that may have contributed to render him somewhat low, and weak, at this time. It is certain, that he was capable of being fatigued. For in his passage from *Judea*, through *Samaria*, (*John* iv. 6.) we find him thus sitting on the well, "wearied with
" his

“ his journey*.”--And the Evangelists relate of him now, “ that he began to be sorrowful, “ and very heavy : and that there appeared “ an angel unto him from heaven strengthen- “ ing him.” If his animal nature could be tired, the exercise he lately had was enough to do it. But of this we must take a distinct view, altho’ it may be somewhat tedious, since the last five days of his life afford materials, which make up a very considerable part of the gospel history.

Six days before the passover, *Jesus* was at *Bethany*†, within about two miles of *Jerusalem*,
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* Some good critics account for our Lord’s sleep in the midst of a storm, by the fatigue of long discourses in public, without any refreshment. Vid. Dr. LARDNER’S supplement. Vol. I. P. 203.

† As St. *John* perused the other gospels, before he wrote his own (according to the testimony of antiquity) it is probable, he has given dates to some of the facts, which the other Evangelists have recorded, and added to, or enlarged upon, some of the facts, which they have dated. And, I think, it is very clear, he did do so. For example, they bring our Lord from *Jericho* to *Jerusalem*, directly, without specifying the particular day, or taking notice of his stop at *Bethany*, where his friend *Lazarus* dwelt, which was in the way. But St. *John*, informs us of both those circumstances. Whence we know, how long it was, at this passover, before our Lord was apprehended : *Jesus*, he says, came to *Bethany* six days before the passover; perhaps, *Friday* on the eve of the sabbath, (the *Jews* reckoning their days from sun-set to sun-set) and on *Sunday*, he entered *Jerusalem*. *Matthew* and *Mark* both had mentioned *Jesus*’s being at *Bethany*, two days before the passover in the house of *Simon* the Leper, where some important affairs happened.

lem, where his friend *Lazarus* dwelt, whom he had raised from the dead. (*John* xii. 1.) Here, it is probable, he kept the sabbath, according to his usual manner, by preaching in the synagogue, and doing works of mercy. Wherefore we will trace him from hence, distinguishing each day, and giving the order of the narration, as well as we can.

SUNDAY. On this day, "a great multitude
 "that were come up to the feast of the
 "passover, when they heard that *Jesus* was
 "coming to *Jerusalem*, took branches of
 "palm-trees, and went forth to meet him,
 "and cried, *Hosanna*, blessed is the king of
 "*Israel* who cometh in the name of the
 "Lord." (*John* xii. 12, 13.) *Jesus*, now willing to cherish this disposition in them, as well as to accomplish an ancient prediction, or accommodate it to himself, (*Zech.* ix. 9.) as soon as he came to that part of the *mount of Olives*, where the borders of *Bethphage* began, "sent two of his disciples, saying unto
 " them,

ed. This history, indeed, *St. John* takes up, and enlarges, as soon as he came to speak of *Jesus* coming thither six days before. *There they made him a supper*; or there was that supper made, so that this he relates a little out of time. And indeed his words do not necessarily imply, as *Dr. Clark* observes, that the supper was made for *Jesus* the same day he came thither. Wherefore, I have chosen to place that affair, where *Matthew* and *Mark* do, two days before the passover. And by connecting *John* xii. 1. to ver. 12. and supposing that the subject of the intermediate verses is resumed, chap. xiii. much perplexity is avoided.

“ them, go unto the village over against you,
 “ and straightway you shall find an ass tied,
 “ and a colt with her: loose them, and bring
 “ them unto me. And if any man say ought
 “ unto you, ye shall tell them that I, your
 “ Lord and Master, have need of them. And
 “ straightway he will send them. And the
 “ disciples went, and did as *Jesus* command-
 “ ed them. And they brought the colt to
 “ *Jesus*, and cast their garments on him, and
 “ set *Jesus* thereon. And many spread their
 “ garments in the way, and others cut down
 “ branches of the trees, and strewed them in
 “ the way. And the people both before, and
 “ behind, cried, *Hosanna ! blessed is he that*
 “ *cometh in the name of the Lord.* Blessed is
 “ the kingdom of our father *David*, that
 “ cometh in the name of the Lord ; *Hosanna*
 “ *in the highest.*” The disciples could not but
 distinguish themselves on this happy occasion,
 and “ praise God with a loud voice, for all
 “ the mighty works which they had seen.”
 Whereupon some of the *Pharisees* from among
 the multitude, said unto him ; “ Master, re-
 “ buke thy disciples.” To which *Jesus* repli-
 ed, that “ if these should hold their peace,
 “ the stones would immediately cry out a-
 “ gainst them.” (*Matth.* xxi. 2---10. *Mark.*
 xi. 7, 11. *Luke* xix. 37--41.)

Amidst the honours and acclamations of
 this triumph, the object before him affected
 his generous heart, and drew tears from his

eyes. " When he was come near, he beheld
 " the city, and wept over it; saying, if thou
 " hadst known, even thou, at least in this
 " thy day, the things which belong unto thy
 " peace! But now they are hid from thine
 " eyes. For the days shall come upon thee,
 " that thine enemies shall cast a trench about
 " thee, and compass thee round, and keep
 " thee in on every side, and shall lay thee
 " even with the ground, and thy children
 " within thee, and they shall not leave in
 " thee one stone upon another; because thou
 " knewest not the time of thy visitation."
 (*Luke xix. 41--45.*)

" And when he was come into *Jerusalem*,
 " all the city was moved, saying, who is this?
 " And the multitude said, This is *Jesus*, the
 " Prophet of *Nazareth of Galilee.*" As soon
 " as he alighted, " he went into the temple
 " of God," and, in the authority of his being
 a Prophet, the same which he had assumed
 in that holy place at the first passover, after
 his entrance on his ministry, *John ii. 13.*
 " cast out all them that sold and bought in
 " the Temple, and overthrew the tables of
 " the mony changers, and the seats of them
 " that sold doves, and said unto them, It is
 " written, my house shall be called the house
 " of prayer; but ye have made it a den of
 " thieves." (*Matth. xxi. 12, 13.*)

The affair of *Lazarus* had made him more
 popular in *Judea* than ever. " For this cause
 " the

" the people also met him, for that they
 " heard, that he had done this miracle," of
 which many among them, then present,
 " bare record." (*John* xii. 17, 18.) Therefore
 when he was come into the Temple, " the
 " blind and the lame came to him, and he
 " healed them." And " when the chief
 " Priests and the Scribes saw the wonderful
 " things that he did, and the children crying
 " in the Temple, and saying, *Hosanna to the*
 "*Son of David* ; they were sore displeased,
 " and said unto him, Hearest thou what these
 " say ? And *Jesus* saith unto them, *Yea, have*
 "*ye never read, out of the mouth of babes and*
 "*sucklings thou hast perfected praise ?*" (*Matth.*
 xxi. 14--17.) Hereupon they held a consul-
 tation, and said among themselves, " perceive
 " ye how ye prevail nothing ? Behold the
 " world is gone after him." (*John* xii. 19.)
 For, like men at their wits end, they could
 not find what they might do to destroy him :
 " for all the people were very attentive to hear
 " him." (*Luke* xix. 48.)

And now, probably, certain *Greeks*, who
 were among them that came to worship at
 the feast, applied to *Philip*, to introduce
 them to *Jesus*, in order to satisfy themselves,
 if he were the Messiah, *that Son of Man*,
 foretold by *Daniel*. This occasioned a very
 important conversation. He spake to them
 both of his *sufferings*, and *glory*. The former,
 tho' at five days distance, sensibly touched
 him.

him. " Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say ? Father, save me from this hour ? *No* ; but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, " I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." All that stood by heard this voice ; but some more imperfectly than others. However, tho' it tended to confirm the acclamations of that day, and prove *Jesus* to be the *Messiah* ; what he spake, of *his death*, was such a paradox to those that were gathered about him, and so perplexed and confounded their minds, as it contradicted the notions they had formed of the *Messiah*, who, they thought, was to be a *temporal Prince*, and to *abide*, or *live for ever*, that, notwithstanding all his miracles, and this wonderful attestation from *heaven*, it does not appear, he gained many profelytes. Wherefore, when he had told them how inexcusable they were ; that they had now *the light* with them, and had bid them improve it ; and " having looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come," (*Mark* xi. 11.) he departed and did hide himself from them. (*John* xii. 20--37.) going, perhaps, privately out of the Temple and City, and then back again to *Bethany*, with the twelve, where they lodged that night. (*Matth.* xxi. 17.

MONDAY. As *Jesus* was coming to the city from *Bethany*, this morning he was hungry. And observing a fig-tree some little distance

stance out of the road, having leaves, he went up to it, to see if haply he might find any thing thereon. But when he came, he found nothing but leaves. Whereupon *Jesus* said, probably, designing the leafy tree as an emblem of the *Jewish* nation, that had not brought forth fruit suitable to what might have been expected from it; "No man eat " fruit of thee hereafter forever." This he spake in the hearing of the disciples, and for their immediate instruction. (*Mark* xi. 12, 13, 14.)

And when they were come to *Jerusalem*, *Jesus* went into the Temple, and, the buyers and sellers having been encouraged, as some* think, in opposition to him, to resume their old traffick, in the court of the *Gentiles*, he " began to cast out them that sold and bought " in the Temple, and overthrew the tables " of the money-changers, and the seats of " them that sold doves; and would not suffer " that any man should carry any vessel " through the Temple. And he taught, " saying unto them, Is it not written, My " house shall be called of all nations the house " of prayer? But ye have made it a den of " thieves." (v. 15--18.)

As he was teaching and preaching the gospel this day, he was interrupted by the *Sanhedrim*. The chief Priests and the Scribes came

* See Mr. *Whiston's* view of the Harmony, &c. p. 130, 131. And Dr. *Doddridge's* Family Expositor upon the gospels. Sect. 147. vol. 2. p. 299. Note (c) and Sect. 150. p. 316. Note (a)

came upon him, with the elders of the people, and demanded to know, what authority he had to act the part which he did the day before, and was now acting? or in their own words, “ by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?” This was, undoubtedly, coming to the point. But tho’ they would have had a better right to put the question, had they reversed the order they formerly made, that “ if any man did confess he was *Christ*, he should be put out of the synagogue.” (*John* ix. 22.) And tho’ they might expect a plain and direct answer; yet *Jesus*, knowing them, and being never off his guard, refused to gratify them, until they should discover a proper disposition to truth. Wherefore, he proposed to them a previous question. “ And *Jesus* answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I, in likewise, will tell you, by what authority I do these things. The baptism of *John*, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? and they reasoned with themselves, saying, if we shall say, from heaven, he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, of men, we fear the people; for all hold *John* as a Prophet. And they answered *Jesus*, and said, we cannot tell. And he said unto them, neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.” (*Matth.* xxi. 26--27.) This was no chicanary, nothing frivolous or evasive

evasive in our Lord. The question, he proposed, was relative to the same point with their own. But their reasoning, and reply, plainly discovered they were not in quest of truth; but rather, that they came with an intention to extort and draw something from him, which, in the hearing of the people, they might turn into an accusation against him of either blasphemy, or sedition.

Whereupon, the men of the *Sanhedrim* being disappointed, in their aim, *Jesus* desired their attention to *two parables*. In the first, by the similitude of the *two sons*, he shewed, that the behaviour, conduct, and choice of those whom they thought the worst sort of the people, *Publicans* and *Harlots*, had been much preferable to theirs, ever since the first publication of the gospel. And in that of *the wicked husbandmen*, he set forth the treatment which they, the rulers of that church, had given to persons sent from God; how they would treat the *Messiah*, signified by *the Son*; and what would be their end. Which, when they heard, "they perceived that he spake of them;" and were so exasperated, that they would have laid hold of him that instant, but the fear of the people restrained them, because they took him for a prophet. (*Matth.* xxi. 28. *Luke* xx. 10.) Upon this I suppose, they departed, to their own chamber, in the Temple, in order to consult together what method to pursue with him.

E

After

After they were withdrawn, *Jesus* uttered to the people the *parable of the marriage of the king's son*; related *Matth. xxii. 1--15.*

In the interim, the resolution, which the council came to, was, to “*entangle him in his talk*,” by proposing difficult and ensnaring questions to him, whereby they might have an opportunity to take hold of his words, and so deliver him unto the power and authority of the *Roman* governor. (*Matth. xxii. 15. Luke xx. 20.*) In pursuance of this resolution, they selected several persons, from different sects, to act this artful and base part, “*who should feign themselves just men*,” the better to circumvent him. The first were the *Herodians*. And these, whether they were Partisans and Courtiers of *Herod*, or not, came with a vast deal of complaisance. “*Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, why tempt you me, ye hypocrites? shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar, the things which are Cæsar's; and*”

“*unto*”

“ unto God, the things that are God's. And
 “ they could not take hold of his words be-
 “ fore the people : and they marvelled at his
 “ answer, and held their peace ; and left
 “ him, and went their way.” (*Matth.* xxii.
 16--22. *Luke* xx. 21--27.)

They being baffled, are succeeded by the
Saducees, who say, “ there is no resurrection.”
 They, no doubt, hoped to run him into some
 absurdity, and at least expose him to con-
 tempt before his audience. What they had
 humbly to propose, was, the solution of, what
 they thought, a very great difficulty, on sup-
 position of the truth of a resurrection.
 “ Master, *Moses* said, if a man die, having no
 “ children, his brother shall marry his wife,
 “ and raise up seed unto his brother. Now
 “ there were with us seven brethren, and the
 “ first, when he had married a wife, deceased,
 “ and having no issue, left his wife unto his
 “ brother. Likewise the second also, and
 “ the third unto the seventh. And last of
 “ all the woman died also. Therefore in the
 “ resurrection, whose wife will she be of the
 “ seven ? for they all had her. *Jesus* answer-
 “ ed and said unto them, ye do err, not
 “ knowing the scriptures, nor the power of
 “ God. For in the resurrection, they neither
 “ marry, nor are given in marriage ; but are
 “ as the angels of God in heaven. But as
 “ touching the resurrection of the dead, have
 “ ye not read that which was spoken unto

“ you by God, saying, I am the God of
 “ *Abraham*, and the God of *Isaac*, and the
 “ God of *Jacob*? God is not the God of the
 “ dead, but of the living.” This answer,
 of our Lord, produced an effect different to
 what was expected. The multitude, who
 heard it, were astonished at his doctrine; and
 even certain of the *Scribes*, themselves, could
 not forbear joining in his applause. (*Matth.*
xxii. 23--34. Luke xx. 39.)

When tidings of the ill success of the *Herodians* and *Saducees*, came to the ears of the
Pharisees, who chiefly composed the *Sanbedrim*; they gathered together, and again went
 and beset him in a body. One of them, who
 was a *Scribe* in the law, who had heard all
 that had passed, and perceived the advantage,
Jesus had hitherto had, began to tempt him
 with his question. “ Master, which is the
 “ first or great commandment in the law?
 “ *Jesus* saith unto him, Thou shalt love the
 “ Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with
 “ all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This
 “ is the first and great commandment. And
 “ the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love
 “ thy neighbour as thyself, on these two
 “ commandments hang all the law, and the
 “ prophets.” (*Matth. xxii. 34--41.*) The
 lawyer, hereupon, ingenuously confessed the
 truth and pertinence of our saviour’s reply;
 and he, in his rejoinder, pronounced the
 lawyer

lawyer to be “ not far from the kingdom of
“ God.” (*Mark* xii. 32--35.)

Before the *Pharisees* withdrew, *Jesus*, in his turn, took the opportunity to propound a very curious and interesting question to them; a question which might have led them to unravel the chief perplexing circumstance in prophecy, relating to the *Messiah*, and to view him in a twofold condition. “ What
“ think ye of *Christ*? whose Son is he? They
“ say unto him, the Son of *David*. He saith
“ unto them, how then doth *David* in spirit
“ call him, *Lord*; Saying, *The Lord said*
“ *unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till*
“ *I make thine enemies thy footstool*? If *David*
“ then call him *Lord*, how is he *his* Son?
“ And no man was able to answer him a
“ word, neither durst any man, from that
“ day forth, ask him any more questions”.
(*Matth.* xxii. 41.)

Thus ended these temptations, as being beset and harrassed with captious questions, may fitly be stiled: which could not but be some trial to our Lord, notwithstanding his superior advantages. Probably after this, he again privately withdrew from the temple, and city, with his disciples, to some part of the *mount of Olives*, the usual place of his retirement and devotion, where he abode that night.

TUESDAY. In the morning, as they passed by, in their way from *Mount Olivet*, to the
city,

city, the disciples saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. Which fact *Peter* took notice of to *Jesus*: "Master, behold, the fig-tree, which thou cursedst, is withered away." Whereupon he discoursed to them of the faith of miracles; the duty of prayer; and the necessary qualification of forgiveness; all this, probably, in their way to the city. (*Mark* xi. 20--27) Being come again into the temple, he took his place in the outer-court, over against the treasury, where he had an opportunity of beholding the people cast in their offerings. "Many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing." Whereupon he called unto him his disciples, and particularly recommended her liberality, as far excelling all the rest. *Mark* xii. 41.

He preached this day without any interruption. His discourse turned chiefly upon the doctrines and manners of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*; whose opposition to him, and the gospel, as particularly shewn the day before, had given him just occasion to expose them. He, therefore, lay'd open many of their absurd maxims; censured their pride, hypocrisy, avarice, and ignorance; and spake with that freedom and boldness which well suited his mission and character. Besides the multitude, his disciples were called to attend. They were specially to avoid those things, which he condemned

demned in the *Jewish* doctors. From the poignancy of expression, and the *woes* he denounced, it is, perhaps, the most alarming discourse, as well as the last, he ever preached in the Temple, or any where else in *public*. St. *Matthew* has preserved the principal contents thereof (*Chap.* xxiii.) In the conclusion of it, he summed up all the wickedness of that people in the crime of *murder*; foretold their approaching ruin; pathetically bewailed their obstinacy; and finally, took his farewell both of that holy house, and them. “ Be-
 “ hold I send unto you prophets, and wise
 “ men, and scribes; and some of them ye
 “ shall kill, and crucify, and some of them
 “ ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and
 “ persecute them from city to city; that
 “ upon you may come all the righteous blood
 “ shed upon the earth, from the blood of
 “ righteous *Abel*, unto the blood of *Zacha-*
 “ *rias*, son of *Barachias*, whom ye slew be-
 “ tween the temple and the altar. Verily I
 “ say unto you, all these things shall come
 “ upon this generation. O *Jerusalem*, *Jeru-*
 “ *salem*, Thou that killest the prophets, and
 “ stonest them which are sent unto thee,
 “ how often would I have gathered thy
 “ children together, even as a hen gathereth
 “ her chickens under her wings, and ye
 “ would not. Behold, your house is left
 “ unto you desolate. And I say unto you, ye
 “ shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall
 “ say,

“ say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name
 “ of the Lord.” (v. 34--ult.)

Having thus taken his leave, he went out of the temple, in as private a manner as possible, being only attended, perhaps, by one disciple. That disciple, in his way out, it may be from what he had just heard his Master say, of the impending ruin, could not help observing to him, somewhat of that noble structure and edifice. “ Master, see what
 “ manner of stones, and what buildings are
 “ here. *Jesus* answering said unto him, seest
 “ thou these great buildings? There shall not
 “ be left one stone upon another, that shall
 “ not be thrown down.” This, it is probable, that disciple told to three of his brethren, who met, and joined, their Master, and him, without the city, that afternoon. When *Jesus* arrived to that part of the *mount of Olives*, which was over against the temple, he sat down. Then *Peter* and *James*, and *John*, and *Andrew*, asked him privately concerning those awful events, which he had foretold. “ Tell us, when shall these things
 “ be? and what shall be the sign, when all
 “ those things shall be fulfilled?” (*Mark* xiii. 1--5.) When the twelve were come up, and now with him alone by themselves, it is probable, *Jesus* gave them that prophetic account, and those striking representations of the judgments to come, *to wit*, the *destruction* of *Jerusalem*, and the *end of the World*,
 which

which are related by *St. Matth. Chap. xxiv.* and *xxv.*

Having finished this melancholy subject with suitable instructions, touching those awful and calamitous times, it is probable he abode with them that night on the *mount of Olives.* (*Luke xxi. 37.*)

WEDNESDAY. On this day the *Sanhedrim* [being irritated and enraged, perhaps the more, because of the discourse which *Jesus* yesterday delivered in the temple,] for the sake of privacy, “ assembled together unto
“ the palace of the high priest, who was
“ called *Caiaphas.* And they consulted, that
“ they might take *Jesus* by subtilty, and kill
“ him ;” with all convenient expedition and secrecy, “ lest there should be an uproar a-
“ mong the people.” (*Matth. xxvi. 3, 4, 5.*) As *Jesus* knew what they were about, instead of coming to *Jerusalem*, he went therefore, to *Bethany.* “ There, in the house of *Simon*
“ the Leper, they made him a supper. And
“ the sisters of *Lazarus* being present,
“ *Martha* served ; but *Lazarus* was one of
“ them that sat at the table with him. Then
“ took *Mary* a pound of ointment of spike-
“ nard, very costly, and anointed the head
“ and feet of *Jesus*, and wiped his feet with
“ her hair ; and the house was filled with the
“ odour of the ointment.” Whereupon *Judas* *Isca-riot* first openly discovered his base avaricious temper, and said, perhaps, to the dis-

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ciples that sat near him, instilling his poisonous reflections, and prejudices against the woman, into them also: (*Matth. xxvi. 8. Mark xiv. 4, 5.*) “ *Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?* Not that he cared for the poor; but he spake this because **he** was a thief, and had the bag.” For if it had been sold and the money deposited with him, he could have appropriated some of it to his own use. Upon this, *Jesus* rebuked him, before them all. “ Let her alone.” Why do you trouble and reflect upon her? “ She hath wrought a good work on me,”--You freely bestow your unctions on the dead bodies of your friends. “ Against the day of my burying hath she kept this. As for the poor, always you have them with you: and whenever you will, ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.” *q. d.* D’ont unreasonably grudge the little expence of this piece of respect which she has shewn; for I shall not be long with you. And instead of approving the reflections of *Judas*, he declared, that *that action* of hers should be celebrated wheresoever his gospel was preached, throughout the whole world. (*Mark xiv. 6--10.*) At this rebuke, and declaration, it is probable, *Judas* took umbrage, and thought himself highly affronted. For, from hence, he conceived his black design, to betray his Master. (*Matth. xxvi. 14, 15, 16.*)

In the interim, *Jesus* not coming to *Jerusalem*, and the news of his being at *Bethany*, being carried thither, “much people of the
 “*Jews* therefore knew that he was there,
 “and they came, not for *Jesus* sake only;
 “but that they might see *Lazarus* also,
 “whom he had raised from the dead.” But it had another effect on the chief priests. When they heard where he was, “they consulted, that they might put *Lazarus* also
 “to death : because that by reason of him
 “many of the *Jews* went away, and believed
 “on *Jesus*.” (*John* xii. 2--12.)

When supper was ended, and the company that came were withdrawn, *Jesus* put off his upper garment, “and took a towel and
 “girded himself. After that he poureth water
 “into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe them with the towel
 “wherewith he was girded.” *Peter*, indeed, at first, did not care his Lord should perform so mean a service to him. However, when he had permitted it, and they were washed, *Jesus* pronounced them “clean ; but not all.
 “For he knew who would betray him :
 “therefore said he, *ye are not all clean*. So
 “after he had washed their feet, and had
 “taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, know ye what I
 “have done to you?” He then explained the meaning, and proposed his example, to them. Mean while, as he saw how *Judas*’s resent-

ment wrought into malice, he applied to himself a passage out of *Psal.* xli. 9. *He that eateth bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me.* And he bid them remember it, as an instance of his fore-knowledge, in order to strengthen their faith in him, when they should see this also accomplished in him. He then told them, they were his ambassadours and representatives. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, he “ that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth “ me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth “ him that sent me. When *Jesus* had thus “ said, he was troubled in spirit,” knowing how unworthy one of them was of that office. And he could not forbear to testify it plainly. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, “ that one of you shall betray me.” This amazed them. And as they doubted who it should be, *Peter* beckned to *John*, who sat leaning on his master at the table, to get the secret. Whereupon, *Jesus*, having made him acquainted with the token, “ took a morsel, “ and dipped it in wine, or some other liquor “ then on the table, and gave it to *Judas* “ *Iscaiot*.”—Whether *Judas* grew more enraged, at being again, publicly, rebuked, and pointed out as a bad man by his master, as he might think, certain it is, “ after the sop, “ *Satan* entered into him,” and he, from that instant, became his adversary. For he rose up, and went immediately out, altho’ it was late

late in the evening, to *Jerusalem*, where he made his infamous contract, to betray him.

Judas being withdrawn, *Jesus* was more at liberty, to speak freely, and affectionately, to the eleven, what is related from *John Chap. xiii.* 31. to the end of *Chap. xiv.* when he finished this warm and instructive discourse by making a motion to them to depart. On this they arose, and went, as I suppose, and lodged in some house or garden, on the *mount of Olives*.

THURSDAY. In the morning *Jesus* was, probably, with his disciples in *Gethsemane*, or some garden on the *mount of Olives*, where, as there might be persons in view at this time pruning their vines, he took occasion to introduce his discourse, with a similitude borrowed from thence. “ I am the true vine,
“ and my father is the husbandman. Every
“ branch in me that beareth not fruit, he
“ taketh away ; and every branch that beareth
“ fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth
“ more fruit.” See at large, *John, Chap. xv. xvi.* which contains this discourse: which is full of consolatory, and instructive matter ; very expressive of his great love, and well suited to impress their hearts, and preserve them faithful in their duty to him.

This being “ the first day of unleavened bread,” his disciples, perhaps when they saw *Judas* was returned, and knowing that he did not leave them over night to buy any thing

thing for the feast, as they then thought; because *Jesus* said unto him, " what thou " doest, do quickly." (*John* xiii. 27, 28, 29.) I say, when the disciples knew all was yet to be provided, they said unto him, " Where " wilt thou that we go and prepare, that " thou mayest eat the passover?" Upon this, he called *Peter* and *John*, and gave them the following instructions. " Go ye into " the city, and there shall you meet a man, " bearing a pitcher of water: follow him, " and wheresoever he shall go in, say ye unto " the good man of the house, the master saith, " where is the guest-chamber, where I shall " eat the passover with my disciples? And " he will shew you a large upper room, " furnished and prepared: there make ready " for us. And these two disciples went forth, " and came into the city, and found as he " had said unto them; and they made ready " the passover." (*Mark* xiv. 12--17. *Luke* xxii. 7.)

In the evening, when all was prepared, *Jesus* came to that house, in the city, and there " sat down, and the twelve apostles " with him. And he said unto them, with " desire I have desired to eat this passover with " you before I suffer." (*Luke* xxii. 14, 15.) " And as they sat, and did eat, *Jesus* said, " verily I say unto you, one of you which " eateth with me, will betray me." And now, having heard him say the same thing
yesterday;

yesterday ; “ they began to be sorrowful, and,” in order to purge themselves, “ to say “ unto him, one by one, *Is it I?* and another “ said, *Is it I?*” For by what passed yesterday, only *John*, and *Peter*, may be supposed to have known the *Traitor*. “ And he answered and said unto them, It is one of the “ twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.” (*Mark* xiv. 18, 19, 20.) “ The son of man “ goeth as it is written of him : but woe unto “ that man, by whom the son of man is betrayed : it had been good for that man, “ if he had not been born.” Then *Judas*, who could not but take it to himself, answered and said, “ *Master, is it I?*” To whom *Jesus* replied, Thou knowest that askest the question. (*Matth.* xxvi. 24, 25.)

After the passover, *Jesus* instituted his own supper, and concluded with singing an hymn. That solemnity being over, and, I suppose, *Judas* gone out, he offered up, to his heavenly father, that prayer, which *St. John* has recorded, *Chap.* xvii. “ When *Jesus* had spoken “ these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook *Cedron*.” (*Chap.* xviii. 1.)

In their way towards the *mount of Olives*, the apostles were so full of the notions of temporal power, and grandeur, for them by and by, that “ there arose a strife amongst “ them, who of them should be counted the “ greatest.” This was another trial of our Lord’s patience, who heard, and endeavoured to

to allay their heat and ambition, and, if possible, to exterminate out of their minds, that gross conceit, of the nature of his kingdom, which had set them at variance. He then told them of the imminent danger they all were exposed to, that very night, to forsake him; according to that saying of the prophet, *smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered*. However, that neither the attachment of his person, nor his death, should finally separate them; for that he should rise again, and would meet them in *Galilee*. Upon this, *Peter* desired to be excepted out of the number of those who should take offence, at any thing that might befall him. *Jesus* told him, that he was so far from having a right to be excepted, that “that very night, before the “cock crew, he would thrice deny him.” *Matth.* xxvi. 31--35.)

Being come unto the *mount of Olives*, to that part of it where the *garden* was, the place of his usual resort, he entered into it with his disciples. When he was at the place, he said unto them, “*pray, that ye enter not “into temptation.*” (*Luke* 22. 40. *John* 18. 1.)

Thus have we taken a brief view of the previous circumstances through which our Lord passed.

And now began the subject of our present inquiry, *his sorrow and anguish*. When we consider his public sermons, which were levelled at the vices of that generation; his prophe-

prophetical discourses, which related chiefly to woeful and calamitous events ; his private instructions to his disciples, which for the most part respected either his own, or their, sufferings : I say, when we consider the nature and kind of his work as a teacher, as well as his constancy therein, it is no wonder, if his spirits were agitated, and his mind received a taint from those melancholy topics. Add to this, the perpetual guard he was obliged to keep against the insidious behaviour of the *Sanhedrim*, to get him into their power ; and the task he had, to bear with the weakness of his followers, and to cheer and support them under the cloud that was coming over him. When these things in particular are considered, among the above-mentioned occurrences of the five preceding days, it is no wonder, if he was now fatigued, and a languor, and heaviness came upon him ? If the disciples*, who only attended on him, and to him, tho' perhaps, with no great fervour of mind, were weary, and heavy ; what must he be, whose work, trials, and exercises were so very great, and who partook of flesh and blood, in common, with them ? *Then saith he unto them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. And he went a little further,*

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and

* " For the fatigue and trouble they had undergone, " had exhausted their spirits, and their eyes were quite " weighed down with weariness and sorrow." Vid. *Doddridge on Mark xiv. 40.*

and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

This brings us to that other branch of our inquiry.

II. *Secondly*, What those evils were, which might naturally present themselves to the mind of our Lord, which he expressed under the notion of THE CUP? As this was an eastern figure, and used by him at other times, when he spake thereof with an emphasis, calling it *the Cup*, and *my Cup*, it may be proper to examine his meaning then, and see whether he had not the same precision of ideas on each occasion. The first time we meet with it, in his history, is, as he was coming up to *Jerusalem*. *Matth. xx. 20, 24.* “ Then came to
 “ him the mother of *Zebedee*’s children, with
 “ her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a
 “ certain thing of him. And he said unto
 “ her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him,
 “ Grant that these my two sons may sit, the
 “ one on thy right hand, and the other on the
 “ left, in thy kingdom. But *Jesus* answered and said, ye know not what ye ask.
 “ Are ye able to drink of *the Cup*, that I
 “ shall drink of, and to be baptized, with the
 “ baptism, that I am baptized with? They
 “ say unto him, we are able. And he saith
 “ unto them, ye shall drink indeed of *my Cup*,
 “ and be baptized with the baptism, that I
 “ am baptized with; but to sit on my right
 “ hand,

“ hand, and on my left, is not mine to give,
 “ but for whom it is prepared of my Father.”
 It does not appear, that *James* and *John* hesitated, about his meaning. On the contrary, they answer, as if they understood, that he spake of certain previous sufferings, which they would, willingly, partake of, with him, so they might but obtain their request. And this they might know, from the common manner, among the *Jews*, of expressing affliction, under the metaphors of *a Cup*, and *baptism*. However, it is likely, he meant to refer them, by these figures, to the sufferings he had just, that very instant, been telling, the *Twelve*, would befall him. “ Behold, we
 “ go up to *Jerusalem*; and the son of man
 “ shall be betrayed unto the chief Priests, and
 “ unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn
 “ him to death, and shall deliver him to the
 “ Gentiles, to mock and to scourge, and to
 “ crucify him.” (*Ver.* 18, 19.) This was the portion of affliction that awaited him; what was peculiarly allotted for *the son of man*, tho’ his followers might taste thereof too. And his question plainly is, can you endure so great evils? “ are ye able to drink of this cup?”

Again. He used the same figure of speech before he went out of the *garden*, on account of the resistance which *Peter* made, when he drew the sword, and was for defending him against those who came to seize his person.

(*John* xviii. 11.) “ *The Cup, which my Father*

that given me, shall I not drink it ?" Here the import of the metaphor lies obvious. The *Cup* was a series of afflictions, which he was then entering upon. And if, under this notion, he meant that determinate portion of evil, that reached from his apprehension to his death ; it is highly probable, he meant to denote the like, by the same figurative expression, in that prayer, which he now offered up. "*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.*" It seems forced and unnatural to suppose he should mean to express, at this time, any thing else, by the metaphor, different from what he meant by it both a little before, and afterwards.

Again, There is one observation to be made on St. *Mark's* account, that will assist our inquiry. Our Lord, in this his retirement, he says, " fell on the ground, and " prayed, that, *if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.* And he said, *Abba,* " *Father, all things are possible unto thee ; take* " *away this cup from me.*" Here, we see, plainly, the *hour*, and the *cup*, import one and the same affliction. What that was, his own words, to the three disciples, a little after, may sufficiently direct us to.--" It is " enough, *the hour* [what I have been depre- " cating] is come : behold the son of man is " betrayed into the hands of sinners."

This being so, the evils comprehended by our Lord, under this notion of the *cup*, which
might

might naturally be supposed to present themselves to his mind, were twofold ; and may be distinguished into--such as related to himself, and such as related to others.--Of the first sort were,

(1.) That he should be betrayed by one of his own disciples. Those which were given him by his Father, and were approved by himself, to be his intimate associates, were *twelve*. These were chosen to be witnesses of his doctrine, life, and actions ; and whom he also called *Apostles* ; they being sent by him, to publish the gospel of the kingdom of God. *Judas Iscariot* had this honour, in common with the rest ; and is, therefore, frequently stiled, by the epithet of, *one of the twelve*. He had the privilege of near access, and personal familiarity with his master. It is probable, he had some good qualities, being purse-bearer to our Lord, and his select family. But whatsoever they were, they were over-ballanced by his covetousness, censoriousness, impatience of rebuke, revenge and hypocrisy. There is no doubt, but *Jesus* endeavoured to keep him from being lost, and to form him, amongst the rest, after his own divine temper. But tho' he had the advantage of the best teacher, and the brightest example of morality, in his master, instead of being honest and faithful, he became a traitor to him. He sought out for his enemies, and made overtures and proposals to them, touch-

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ing the very thing they wanted. "He communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them, in the absence of the multitude." (*Luke* xxii. 4, 6.) Thus, one who was numbered with the Apostles, and took part of the ministry of the gospel, was base enough to propose this question; "what will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" (*Matth.* xxvi. 15.) The guilt of his treachery arose in proportion to the rank he held. It must needs affect our Lord, that one so near his person should act such a part. Accordingly we find, that "he was troubled in spirit, when he testified, and said, verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." (*John* xiii. 21.) Great minds have a delicacy in their perception. They feel ingratitude more than others, as they are less deserving of it. And indeed the best men have met with this sort of ill usage. *David*, more than once, deplores the like, in language, which shewed how sensibly he was touched. "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me.--For it was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have born it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me.--But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance, &c." (*Psal.* xli. 9. and lv. 12, 13.)

There

There are two things, that will set the par of *Judas* in its proper light. One is, the contempt he discovered for his master, in offering to betray him, for so small a price as *thirty pieces of silver*. For this was no more than what the *Jews* usually gave for the purchase of a slave. The other is, the pernicious influence, this conduct of his must have had, on the minds of the *Sanhedrim*. They were prejudiced against *Jesus* already; but this his disciple comes, and confirms them therein. They had formed a resolution to take *Jesus*. *Judas* proposes to them the means. Let him but have a band of men, he would guide them to his retreat, the next night, and give them such directions, that he should be brought securely to them. How this was received, we are told by *St. Mark*, see *Chap. xiv. 11*. *And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money*. And it is very probable, if he had asked more, he might have had it. But covetousness was not his only vice. He had another passion, at this time, to gratify, that of *malice* and *revenge*. Under how favourable a light did the *Sanhedrim*, now, behold their own wicked measures? Had they any possible room left to think worthily of *Jesus*, as the *Messiah*, when one of his intimate associates, who had the opportunity of knowing him better than they, required no higher a reward to deliver him

him up unto them, than if he were some ordinary pitiful fellow?

Now that this baseness and treachery of *Judas Iscariot* bore somewhat of a frightful aspect to the mind of our Lord, may be gathered from his manner of expression, when he awoke *Peter*, and the two sons of *Zebedee*, the last time, "Rise, let us be going; behold, He is at hand that doth betray me." (*Matth.* xxvi. 46.)

(2.) Another evil in view, was, the arrest and seizure of his person. *The Prince, the most holy*, as *Daniel* styles him, (*Chap.* ix. 24, 25.) was to endure a great change in his character and condition. *Jesus* had hitherto answered many of the prophetic marks of the *Messiah*, in his life, doctrine, and miracles. But this that is written remained yet to be accomplished in him, *And he was numbered with the transgressors.* (*Isa.* liii. 12. *Luke* xxii. 37.) From the beginning of his public ministry, down to this period, he appeared in an eminent and respectable light, with growing honour. He had been proclaimed by *John the Baptist*, whom all men acknowledged to be a prophet, as one vastly his superior, in office and dignity. (*Matth.* iii. 11.) By means whereof, and by his doctrines and miracles, "his fame had spread abroad every where, from Galilee throughout all Syria;" inasmuch that "great multitudes of people," who saw the instances of his beneficence and power,
" followed

“ followed him, with wonder and amazement.” (*Matth.* iv. 25. vii. 28. ix. 33. xv. 30, 31. *Mark* i. 27. iii. 7, 8. vi. 55, 56.)

He was crouded almost wherever he came : so that, sometimes, “ in the house where he “ was, they could not so much as eat bread.” And no wonder, since “ the people began to “ carry about in beds those that were sick, “ where they heard he was. And whither- “ soever he entred, into villages or cities, or “ country, they laid the sick in the streets, “ and besought him, that they might touch “ if it were but the border of his garment ; “ and as many as touched it were made “ whole.” (*Mark* iii. 20. vi. 55, 56.) *St. Luke*, in noting his vast audience, says, “ the “ people were gathered thick together : an “ innumerable multitude [myriads] of people, “ insomuch that they trod one upon another.” (*Chap.* xi. 29. xii. 1.)

Indeed, such were the expectations of the *Jewish* nation, at this time, of an extraordinary person from among them, to assume the *dominion** foretold by the prophets ; and such wonderful works did shew forth themselves in *Jesus*, that it was owing to design, and contrivance, whenever he was private and solitary. When he had “ fed about five thousand men, “ besides women and children, with five barley

* See Dr. SYKES's excellent *Essay upon the truth of the Christian Religion*. Cha. i. and ii. 2d. Edit.

“ loaves and two small fishes ; those men
 “ when they had seen the miracle,” which
 so nearly resembled that of *Moses*, who fed
 their fathers in the *wilderness* with *Manna* ;
 and calling to mind that promise, that *God*
would raise up to them a prophet, like unto him ;
 could not forbear saying, “ This is of a truth
 “ *that prophet* that should come into the
 “ world. When *Jesus* therefore perceived
 “ that they would come and take him by
 “ force, to make him a king ; he first sent
 “ away his own disciples,” to whom he knew
 that motion was agreeable, and then dispersed
 the multitude ; himself retiring into a moun-
 tain alone. (*Mark* vi. 46. *John* vi. 14, 15.)
 But before this, at *Capernaum*, we find, “ all
 “ the city gathered together at the door of the
 “ house where he was.” And when, to avoid
 this popularity, “ he would no more openly
 “ enter into the city, but was without in de-
 “ sart places, they came unto him from every
 “ quarter,” so that go where he would, with
 “ all his precaution, he could not be hid.”
 (*Mark* i. 33, 45, vii. 24.)

If it be said, *Jesus* had not this esteem every
 where, and did not appear thus respectable to
 every person : it is granted. The *Evangelists*,
 who were artless men, and who conceal no
 truth, tho’ it may seem to their master’s dis-
 honour, relate some ill-treatment he met with
 in his own city, and among his own kindred.
 But even here, “ they were astonished at his
 “ wisdom,

“ wisdom, and his mighty works ;” and were offended in him only because of his mean parentage and education. (*Matth.* xiii. 54, 58.) And as to the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, even they could not but own his miracles, tho’ they perversly ascribed his power to the *prince of devils*. (*Matth.* ix. 34.) Why, or upon what account, they became his enemies, is very plain. His doctrine contradicted theirs ; and his manner and behaviour thwarted all their expectations of temporal grandeur. However, “ there were among the *chief rulers* and “ *pharisees* many who believed on him :” tho’ they did not publicly confess him. And those who did not believe, were desirous to see him ; as was *Herod the Tetrarch* of a long season.” And this piece of respect they paid, they often invited him to their tables (*John* xii. 42. *Luke* ix. 9. xi. 37. xiv. i. xxiii. 8. *Matth.* xiv. 1.) Wherefore if *Jesus* was not believed on as the *Messiah*, by all, he was generally esteemed as an extraordinary person ; “ it being said, by some, that *John* the Baptist “ was risen from the dead ; and by some, “ that *Elias* had appeared, and by others, “ that one of the old prophets was risen “ again.” He being “ a prophet mighty in “ deed and word before God, and all the “ people.” (*Luke* ix. 7, 8. xxiv. 19.)

There are two things which shew the high esteem and veneration in which *Jesus* was held, before his apprehension. The one is,

the manner and form in which he was usually addressed. We find persons, of rank and figure, using like words and expressions, and the same posture of worship and reverence to him, as to persons and characters of the first dignity. Thus, "the *Roman* Centurion sent " by his friends, saying unto him, Lord, " I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter " under my roof: Wherefore neither thought " I myself worthy to come unto thee; but " say in a word, and my servant shall be " healed." (*Luke* vii. 7.) And *Jairus*, the " ruler of the synagogue, " when he saw " *Jesus*, he fell at his feet." (*Mark* v. 22.) And another accosts him in the same manner, " kneeling down to him, and saying, Lord, " have mercy on my son." (*Matth.* xvii. 14, 15.) Even within the coasts of *Judea* itself, where most of his enemies resided, we read of one, " who had great possessions, who " came running, and kneeled to him," and craved his instructions. " Good master, what " shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" (*Mark* x. 17.) The other thing, which shews the high reputation and honour in which *Jesus* was held, is, the stile and title which was usually given unto him, of *Son of David*. This imported, if not his royal extraction from that house, at least some princely dignity, and was, perhaps, the very character descriptive

scriptive of the *Messiah*,* who, they thought, would be a temporal king, as *David* was. Now this title was so commonly ascribed to *Jesus*, that we read, "the two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou *Son of David*, have mercy on us." And at another time, "all the people were amazed, and said, is not this the *Son of David*?" (*Matth.* ix. 27. xii. 23.) Even the *canaanitish* woman had learned to give him this appellation; "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou *Son of David*." And indeed in this character they ushered him into *Jerusalem*, this last time: "*Hosanna* to the *Son of David*." (*Matth.* xv. 22. xxi. 9.)

From what has been said, it is plain, that tho' our Lord did not affect worldly pomp and splendour, yet his external condition and appearance, during his ministry, was highly respectable. He supported a divine character, speaking the words, and doing the works of God, (*John* xiv. 7-12.) and manifested forth his glory, as *the only begotten of the Father*; *the express visible image of the invisible God*. (*John* i. 14. ii. 11. *Heb.* i. 3.)

What a trial then, must our Saviour have, to bring himself to endure so great a change, as was now going to be made, in his character, and condition? He was now to suffer

* Essay upon the Truth of the Christian Religion.
P. 14, 15. 2d. Edit.

himself to be degraded into the form of a criminal, prisoner, and slave.

Could this reverse of fortune cost him no painful thought, no uneasy sensation? It is, perhaps, impossible it should not; especially when it is considered, that this *emptying* himself of his glory, behaving himself *so*, as if he were *void* of all that power which he had received of his Father;* or using it no more than if he had not had it; was an occasion of stumbling to his followers. For tho' the disciples were often foretold, that *the son of man must be delivered into the hands of men*; and were admonished concerning it; yet as soon as they saw their master laid hold on, and bound, "they all forsook him, and fled," (*Mark xiv. 50.*) And tho' *Peter* followed him afar off, even unto the palace of the high priest; he was scandalized to see him in custody, and had not courage enough to own, he so much as *knew the man*. And this is that which accounts for the sudden prodigious change and alteration in the affection and temper of the people, in respect to *Jesus*. The chief priests and rulers feared to take him openly, because of the people, who had declared earnestly for him, and had lately sung *Hosanna*, before him, as their expected king and deliverer. But now, five days after, being, by means of *Judas's* treachery, apprehended in the dead

* Le Clerc's *Supplement to Hammond*, on *Phil. ii. 7*.

dead of the night; when the people saw he was *bound*, and *led*, and intirely *under the power* of the *rulers*, like an ordinary fellow, or private man---*This* undid him at once in their opinion. The miracles he had hitherto wrought were, now, easy to be construed the effects of *magic*, since, instead of some sign of temporal deliverance, which they, probably, expected from him, at this feast, they beheld him under restraint, a helpless prisoner in the hands of his enemies. When the multitude saw him thus, passive and dumb, *like a sheep before her shearers*; at the instigation of the priests, they were readily brought to join aloud in the cry, *crucify him, crucify him*.

But with the attachment of his person, which sunk his reputation, the opprobrious character of *a sinner* was to be put upon him. This could not but be matter of trial and distress to our Lord, who knew how to put a just value upon himself. And indeed every good man will have an aversion more or less, in proportion as his remove is from the opposite character. It must startle and give pain, to our Lord, to appear what he was not; yea, the reverse of what he was. We could hardly conceive him to have been, so much as *a man*, had he been wholly insensible to it; much less, *the holy one, and the just*. (*Act. iii. 14.*) It is true, he knew, before, he must permit his glory to be made void, by appearing in a contrary form. Yet it was not necessary,

cessary, that that fore-knowledge should have extinguished his passion of self-esteem, or have turned his sense of honour from its natural aversion to such an object. If his pious submission to the will of God over-ruled that noble passion, in its laudable struggles, that was sufficient to support his dignity ; and that we know was the case. Wherefore, for him, *who was holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners* ; who knew no sin, to be *made sin* ; to lie under the false and scandalous imputation of guilt, and appear, in the eye of the public, as a *blasphemer of God*, and an *enemy to the State*.--For him, after he had spent himself in the cause of virtue, in relieving the miserable, instructing the ignorant, and being the resplendent image of Deity* itself ; " good, and kind, and merciful ;" now, to be apprehended, and be in the guise of a *DECEIVER*,--this alone, abstracted from all other considerations, must necessarily, and in the nature of the thing, be abhorrent to him. This was one of the evils in that *Cup*, which was before him. It was natural, that he, who exhibited so perfectly bright and spotless a character, should express a dislike, when it came near, to take off so foul and bitter a potion. And that this was part of that which exercised his thoughts, is evident, from his own expostulation with the company,

* Dr. Sykes on Hebrews, Cha. i. 3.

ny, who came to apprehend him. "Are ye
 " come out as against A THIEF with swords
 " and staves for to take me? I sat daily with
 " you teaching in the temple, and ye laid
 " no hold on me." (*Matth. xxvi. 55.*)

(3.) The process, he was to go through, might be another evil in this *Cup*. It was his hard lot to be accounted a criminal of that sort, against whom the laws were most severe and sanguinary. He knew that as the *Jewish* rulers considered him as a blasphemer, and seducer; they would take the most rigorous method, of proceedure, in his trial and condemnation. And hereby, indeed, they could vent their malice, and take their revenge of him, under the appearance of a divine sanction. *Deut. xiii. 8, 9. Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him. But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.* The chief Priests and Scribes acted up to the letter of this law; and without any regard to *time*, or *season*, which, in other cases would have been an argument for more mild and deliberate measures; they sat up all night, thirsting as it were for his blood, ready to convene together, on the first notice. As they stood affected to him, he could expect nothing but cruel and illegal usage, at their hands. And, accordingly, when they

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who had laid hold on him, had brought him bound, first to *Annas*, from whence, perhaps, the notice of his safe arrival in custody was given, and then to *Caiaphas*, at whose palace the *chiefs assembled in council*, the high Priest wanted him to accuse himself. When *Jesus* declined that, and appealed to the common right he had of having *witnesses* produced, of what he had spoke openly to the world; he was unjustly struck by an insolent officer of the court. (*John* xviii. 21, 22.) And tho' they would hear no witnesses *for* him, they thought themselves warranted to *suborn witnesses* to swear *against* him. And when they had, with much difficulty, suborned *two* witnesses; what they swore was *false*; and even if it had been true, that *he said of the temple of God*, what, indeed, he spake of the temple of his body; as he said, *he would build it again*; what they witnessed did not agree so as to equal the charge laid against him, that he was *worthy to die*. (*Matth.* xxvi. 59--62. *Mark* xiv. 59.) Whether the *high Priest* saw this *defect* of evidence, presently, or not, he wanted our Lord to reply. "But he held his peace, and answered nothing." (*Ver.* 61.) For what regard could he expect should be paid to any thing he should offer, by a court who abetted *perjury*, and would hear *no witnesses in his behalf*? However, our Lord's silence threw them into some difficulty. The high Priest, then, *adjured him, by the living God*;

God; which was equivalent to imposing an oath upon him, to say, whether he was *the Christ, the Son of God*, or not? Having reduced our Lord to the necessity of declaring himself, or rendering himself liable to the charge of contemning God, and the most solemn form of testimony which magistrates had a right to call for in his name, *he confessed, and denied not*; tho' it furnished them with the matter they wanted, and opened the way to all that torrent of abuse, which they poured upon him. "Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, prophesy unto us, thou *Christ*, who is he that smote thee?" (*Matth. xxvi. 67--69*). The prospect of having such a trial, and meeting with such treatment, in a court of judicature, must needs be highly offensive.

To this we may add as another evil,

(4.) His being to be delivered up to, and forced as it were upon, the *Roman* power, as a notable criminal, in order to get the sentence of death executed upon him. The *Sankedrim* had not the power of life and death, at this time*. Therefore after they had judged our Lord guilty of death, they held a consultation, in the result of which, "they bound him, and led him away, and delivered him to *Pontius Pilate* the Governor." The character of

* See this proved at large, in *Dr. Lardner's Credib. Gos. Hist.* Vol. i. Cha. ii.

this magistrate, as transmitted by *Jewish* and *Christian* historians, is none of the best; he being represented, "of an inflexible nature, " and withal arrogant and cruel."† Be that as it may. He had too much understanding to be easily imposed on by the *Jewish* Priests and Rulers. They began artfully to prepossess him in their favour, and to charge *Jesus* with what, at most, was only the consequences which they had forcibly drawn from his doctrine. "We found this fellow " perverting the nation, and forbidding to give " tribute to *Cæsar*, saying, that he himself " is *Christ*, a king." (*Luke* xxiii. 1, 2.) As they did not prove this high accusation, to the governor's satisfaction, he recommended them to judge and punish him according to the power they had, in ordinary offences, and misdemeanors: "for he found no fault " in him." This equity and moderation, in *Pilate*, made them "the more fierce." They insisted, that, as the laws at present were, they could not punish him according to his deserts. (*John* xviii. 31.) For "he had stirred " up the people, teaching throughout all " *Jewry*, beginning from *Galilee* to this Place." (*Luke* xxiii. 4--7.) As *Pilate*, now evidently, knew that for envy the chief Priests had delivered him; he was determined to rid himself, of the affair. And hearing that he, originally, belonged to *Herod's*

† *Vulgef.* on *Euseb.* E. H. B. ii. C. 7.

Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to *Herod*, who himself was also at *Jerusalem* at that time. Hither also came "the chief Priests and Scribes, and vehemently accused him." But *Herod*, tho' a *Jew*, did not think their charge well supported. And being greatly disappointed, as to some wonderful works, "he hoped to have seen done by *Jesus*;" he thought him an object of contempt, rather than of fear. "And *Herod* with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, "and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and," after this abusive sport, "sent him again to "*Pilate*." On their return, with the prisoner, *Pilate* made a short speech to the Priests, and Rulers, and chief of the people, signifying, that as *Jesus* had been examined before them all, and his innocence, in the matter whereof they accused him, had appeared, both to *Herod*, as well as to himself, "he "would chastise him, and release him." As *Pilate* observed that they were not content, he had recourse to an expedient, which the approaching festival furnished him with. "Now "at that feast, the governor was wont to re-
 "lease unto the people a prisoner, whom
 "they would. And they had then a nota-
 "ble prisoner, called *Barabbas*; who was
 "a robber, and had committed murder in an
 "insurrection that was lately made." It is probable, *Pilate* imagined, that, when this criminal was set in competition with *Jesus*, their
 malice

malice would never rise to so high a pitch of wickedness as to prefer *Barabbas* to him. " Therefore, when they were gathered together, *Pilate* said unto them, whom will ye that I release unto you? *Barabbas* or *Jesus*, which is called *Christ*? But the chief Priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask *Barabbas*, and destroy *Jesus*." The governor, whether he was unwilling to understand them at first, " answered, and said unto them, whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said *Barabbas*." (*Matth. xxvi. 15--22.*) *Pilate* was now thrown into some perplexity, and began to expostulate with them, on the reason of the thing; but in vain. Whether it was by means of the message which his wife sent, on account of her extraordinary dream, or the glaring injustice of the act they required, finding his argument of no avail, he had recourse to another, tho' a severe and cruel, expedient. " Then *Pilate* therefore took *Jesus* and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, and said, *Hail, king of the Jews*. And they smote him with their hands." When he had sustained this insult and abuse, *Pilate* went forth again, and pronounced his innocence, as to the crimes alledged against him: and, that they might know what punishment he had caused him to undergo, and if possible

possible be diverted into a milder and better temper, he ordered the prisoner to be brought forth, as a public shew and spectacle for them. " Then came *Jesus* forth, wearing " the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man ! " The *Jewish* rulers caught his design, and prevented the effect which he intended to produce on the minds of the populace,. " When " the chief Priests therefore and Officers saw " him, they cried out, saying, *crucify him !* " *crucify him !* " *Pilate*, who perceived their inveterate rage, bid them do it, if they dared.* " Take ye him, and crucify him : for I find " no fault in him." To which they replied, " we have a law, and by our law he ought " to die, because he made himself *the Son of* " *God*. When *Pilate* therefore heard that " saying, he was the more afraid ;" and took *Jesus* again back into the judgment hall ; and when, by his solicitude, he had obtained such an answer, from him, as served to excuse his own conduct, towards him, thus far, " from " thenceforth *Pilate* sought to release him." When they saw what was his determination, " the *Jews* cried out saying, If thou let this " man go, thou art not *Cæsar's* friend. Who-
" soever

* That this is the natural meaning of the place, see *Credi. Gos. His.* Vol. i. P. 90. " You must crucify " him then yourselves, if you can commit such a " villany, for I cannot. He appears to me innocent " as I have told you already ; and I have now punished " him as much, or more than he deserves.

“ soever maketh himself a king, speaketh a-
 “ gainst *Cæsar*.” (*John* xix. 1--13.) Besides
 noise and clamour, which threatned sedition,
 and the peace of the province, they now
 touched on another string: The governor’s
 own security, and his allegiance to *Tiberius*,
 were brought in question. “ And they were
 “ instant with loud voices requiring that he
 “ might be crucified. And the voices of them
 “ and of the chief Priests prevailed. And *Pi-*
 “ *late* gave sentence, that it should be as they
 “ required.” (*Luke* xxiii. 23, 24.) Thus did
 this people oppose, again and again, the judg-
 ment and inclination of the *Roman* governor,
 till at length his politics got the better of his
 conscience, and he was induced, for temporal*
 considerations, to yield to their wicked mea-
 sures. And now was our Lord stripped and
 scourged a second time, and again delivered
 to

* The learned Dr. *Benson*, in his useful *History of the first planting of the Christian Religion*, observes of *Pilate*, that “ having been cruel and tyrannical in the
 “ beginning of his reign, he had rendered himself odious
 “ to the *Jews*. And therefore stood in awe of them;
 “ as fearing they would accuse him of male-admini-
 “ stration, before *Cæsar* the *Roman Emperor*; and so
 “ procure his confinement, banishment, or (perhaps)
 “ even his death. Over-awed by the dread of this, he
 “ permitted them, by mere clamour, to prevail to have
 “ *Jesus* crucified. And when they found that they
 “ had prevailed, in one instance, and had him so much
 “ in their power, it is no wonder, that they proceeded
 “ to act as they pleased, in other instances; and that
 “ they harrassed the *apostles* and disciples of *Jesus*.”
Vid. B. i. P. 108. 2d. Edit.

to the derision and sport of a cohort of soldiers. As their rudeness to the criminal was allowed on these occasions, " they called together the " whole band," and repeated the like and greater indignities to his person than they had done before. They put the purple cloth on him for a robe, and wreathed again the thorns about his head, and gave him to hold a reed in his right hand. When they had done this, " they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, *Hail, king of the Jews!* " and they spit upon him, and took the reed " and smote him on the head," (*Matth.* xxvii. 29, 30.) beating him, as it were, with his own scepter, and expressing tokens of the utmost contempt and scorn.

Thus was the son of man *delivered to the Gentiles*, and their insult and mockery of him procured by his own nation and people. " He " came unto his own, and his own received " him not." He came to " bless them, by " turning away every one of them from their " iniquities:" But they would not have him to reign over them. They consulted to *kill the prince of life*, and basely urged and provoked the *Roman* power to afflict and cut him off.

As our Lord had a foresight of this hard and indignant usage, and perhaps his eye upon it at this very instant; that might warmly affect his natural passions, and become one cause of his present distress.

(5.) Lastly, The particular death he was to suffer, did very probably at this time affect him, and was become the object of his fear and aversion. He often spake of this manner and kind of death, under the terms of being *lifted up*; and described it by the image of *Moses's lifting up the serpent in the wilderness*. By which it is plain, he had familiarized himself to it. However, it was now, notwithstanding, viewed, as it was, a formidable evil.

As *crucifixion* was a *Roman* punishment, and has been disused ever since the *Empire* became *Christian*, it is difficult to give an accurate account of it; and the rather as there were crosses of divers forms, and historians as well as painters have taken liberties in their several descriptions. The most probable account of it, as it obtained at this time at *Jerusalem*, I take to be as follows. When the person, sentenced, had been scourged, and had brought the transverse beam to the place of execution, and it was fixed on the top of an erect piece of timber that was fastned in the ground, which then formed the shape of a T, he was stripped quite naked, and, by cords under his arms, drawn up till his backside reached the midle of the erect piece, where a large peg or kind of wooden horse, jutting between his legs, afforded some support to the weight of his body. His arms were then pulled above his head, and obliquely extended, so as his hands might reach to-
wards

wards the ends of the transverse beam, to which they were then fastened, by large iron nails. His feet, which till now hung down, were then turned, in a tread-like-form, against the upright timber, to which they, in like manner were also nailed.

When besides the *posture* itself, than which the mind can hardly image a more painful one, the laceration of the hands and feet, those tender and nervous parts, with the violence of nails is considered, the punishment of the cross must appear very dreadful. Accordingly we are told, the *Romans* were wont to express their idea of pain, by a word borrowed from *Crucifixion*. Besides, it was so ignominious a punishment, that they inflicted it on none but slaves and the vilest malefactors. And they who suffered it, were open to the insult and mockery of all sorts of people. No measures seem to have been observed, with our Lord, on this occasion. “ And they that passed by
 “ reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and
 “ buildest it in three days, save thy self. If
 “ thou be the Son of God, come down from
 “ the cross. Likewise also the chief priests,
 “ mocking him, with the Scribes and Elders,
 “ said, He saved others; himself he cannot
 “ save. If he be the king of *Israel*, let
 “ him now come down from the cross, and
 “ we will believe him. He trusted in God;
 “ let him deliver him now if he will have
 K 2 “ him;

“ him : for he said, I am the Son of God.
 “ The thieves, also which were crucified
 “ with him, cast the same in his teeth.”
 (*Matth. xxvii. 39--45.*)

Our Lord, we will suppose, had then these horrible images attending him into the garden, *vid.* the preparatory scourging ; the bearing the transverse beam to the place of execution ; the being stript, and hoisted up naked, to the view of some thousands of spectators ; the painful and uneasy posture, in which his body was to be placed on the tree ; the having large nails driven thro’ those tender and nervous parts, such as his hands and feet are, the cruel mockery, and contradiction of sinners, which, sustained in that posture, he was to endure against himself :--I say, our Lord, very probably, had this train of horrible images appearing before him, and assailing his passions, at this time. At the view of these evils innocent nature might, and probably did relucate.

Allowing, that “ he was in all things made
 “ like unto his brethren (sin excepted,)” he was, certainly, liable to pain and shame. Pain, we know, is an alarming sensation ; and as it threatens destruction to nature, does as it were put a man besides himself. Hence, the bare apprehension of it, in certain degrees as possible, shall often intrude into the mind, take forcible possession of the imagination, and raise an emotion in the animal frame. And as to *shame*, as its objects do oppose decency
 and

and glory, its force and power, among other passions, may be allowed to take place in the best of men. Now : “ of all ignominies, an
 * ignominious death is allowed to be the
 “ greatest.”* No wonder, therefore, if the foresight of his cruel and ignominious sufferings were the occasion of some disturbance, to our Saviour, at this time. “ Evil apprehended
 “ to come tormented his soul with fear,” (they are the words of bishop *Pearson*,†)
 “ which was as truly in him in respect of
 “ what he was to suffer, as hope in reference
 “ to the recompence of a reward to come after,
 “ and for his sufferings. Evil apprehended
 “ as present tormented the same with sadness, sorrow, and anguish of mind. So
 “ that he was truly represented to us by the
 “ prophet as *a man of sorrows, and acquainted
 “ with grief*. And the proper subject of that
 “ grief he hath fully expressed, who alone
 “ felt it, saying unto his disciples, *My soul is
 “ exceeding sorrowful even unto death*.” And indeed in enumerating the ingredients in this bitter cup, the acute tormenting pain, and infamy of crucifixion must be regarded.

It will be objected, “ if the deadly sorrow
 “ and sore amazement, our Lord was in,
 “ arose from the apprehension of an ignominious painful death, which he knew would
 “ soon issue in a glorious reward, he dis-
 “ covered

* *Bolingbroke's Letters*, Vol. ii. P. 273. † *On the Creed*. 10 Edit. P. 189.

“ covered less resolution than many of his
 “ followers, who suffered *martyrdom*, for his
 “ sake, in as shameful and cruel a manner,
 “ with courage and fortitude.” This, and a
 great deal more to the same purpose, has been
 said. But it may be replied.

If *Jesus* had been free from the conflict of
 human passions, and perfectly indifferent to
 natural evils, it would abate of the merit of
 his death. What but a severe and difficult
 exercise of obedience can be supposed to en-
 title one to a glorious reward? Besides; no
 kind of reward, how vast soever, or whether
 conferred in three days, or less, can alter the
 nature of pain. Evil will still be evil, and
 what is hateful, to be abhorred. The *joy that*
was set before him, as mentioned by the
 Author to the *Hebrews*, (*Chap. xii. 2.*) sup-
 posed *Jesus* in some such exercise: and it was
set before him, not to render him insensible,
 but, as a motive, which had its proper effect,
 to his *enduring the cross, and despising the*
shame.

Then as to *martyrs*, who are mentioned
 on this occasion; I beg leave to offer a few
 things: (1.) That the writers of their suffer-
 ings are not always to be depended upon. Their
 pious zeal to do honour to the saints, often
 transported them beyond the bounds of truth.
Bellarmino and others of the church of *Rome*,
 have made large concessions on this head.
 Their lives and sufferings were written as they
 might

might be, rather than as they really were.*
 “ It was a notion, saith Dr. *Middleton*,† dili-
 “ gently inculcated, and generally believed at
 “ the same time, which was sufficient of itself
 “ to efface all the terrors of *martyrdom*, viz.
 “ that under all that dreadful apparatus of
 “ racks, and fires, and the seeming atrocity
 “ of their tortures, the martyrs were mira-
 “ culously freed from all sense of pain, nay
 “ felt nothing but transports of joy from the
 “ cruelty of their tormentors. All which is
 “ expressly affirmed by many of the ecclesia-
 “ stical writers.” If therefore these writers
 are to be credited, the martyrs are out of
 the question, and it is impertinent to men-
 tion their courage and fortitude, who felt
 nothing of what they suffered. (2) It may be
 questioned, if the minds of many of the
 martyrs were not perverted by false *philosophi-
 cal*, or *fanatical* principles. If they had
 learned to acquire the *stoical* apathy, to be in-
 sensible of sufferings, or free from all emo-
 tion or perturbation from outward evils; they
 may be considered as having strained them-
 selves, beyond the common measures of hu-
 manity, into other sort of creatures. Or if
 they believed that martyrdom would atone for
 all their crimes; or that it alone would pro-
 cure them a distinguished crown of glory; or
 that *Jesus* would bear all their pains; I say,
 if

* See *Bayle Dict. Art. Valerious*.
 P. 204.

† *Free Inq.*

if they believed such principles, and were actuated by them, how bold and brave soever they were, they were rather frantic, than sober, Christians. And that both *stoicism*, and *fanaticism*, have had a footing within the church, cannot be denied. Our Saviour was incorrupt, and acted upon the principles of reason, and of humanity, in their pure primitive simplicity. But (3) suppose that these writers did not amplify in the account they give, of the intrepidity and calmness of the martyrs who acted upon genuine principles; and that these were never shaken in mind, by the consideration of their sufferings; but were immovable, resolute and steady to the last; (which we know was not always the case;) there are circumstances peculiar to *Jesus Christ*, which, if duly attended to, will make a very wide difference.

For instance: he knew no sin, to reconcile himself to the suffering of death. A sense of guilt will ever be attended with a sense of deserving ill, and will mightily help the mind to bear it, when it comes, altho' it be unjustly inflicted by men. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not;" is the language of the church under affliction. (*Lam. iii. 22.*) And the brave young confessors, who sustained great tortures of body, under the tyrant *Antiochus*, are brought in saying, "For we suffer because of our sins." (*2 Mac. vi. 32.*)
There

There was a time, when Christians sought martyrdom, in the belief of this notion, that it purged them from sin, and freed them from all that pravity and corruption, they saw and disliked in themselves. This, tho' it is not to be justified, shews, how a sense of guilt is capable of operating under affliction. *Jesus Christ* had no motive or argument of this kind. He did not deserve the sufferings which he saw before him, either by way of correction, or punishment, of God, or men.

Again, neither had he any seeds of mortality and dissolution in his frame, to abate the terrors of death, and render it natural to him. He could not say, as the martyrs might, "unto corruption, Thou art my Father." For, as the Son of God, brought into the world in an extraordinary manner, "it was given unto him to have life in himself." (*John* v. 26.) So that his life was his own, or intirely at his own disposal, and beyond the force and controul of any human power. He was not liable to death, without his own consent. "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (*John* x. 18.) The opinion, therefore, of our Lord's being in fear that he should expire, privately, in the garden, and not hold out to triumph over death on the cross; how ingenious soever it be, is not

true. Our reading of *Hebrews*, v. 7. "and was
 " heard in that he feared," which is thought
 to favour that opinion; may be questioned,
 as is seen in the margin of the place. It
 seems as if the author of that epistle, in speak-
 ing of the *strong crying* of our Lord, had in
 view the exclamation he uttered on the cross,
 when "he cried with a loud voice, *Eli, Eli,*
 " *Lama Sabachthani.*" But this is by the bye.

Again, as our Lord had not a morbidick
 constitution of body, his organs and animal
 spirits being pure, must afford quick sensa-
 tions. The first man, who was created im-
 mediately by God, is the only example,
 whereto *that holy thing*, which, by the energy
 of the Holy Ghost, was born of a virgin, can
 be likened or compared. Wherefore, it is
 most congruous to place the human constitu-
 tion of our Lord, with the highest degree of
 the kind. Accordingly, it is the opinion of
 very intelligent persons, that his body was of
 a finer frame and texture, than that of any of
 the fallen sons of *Adam*; and consequently,
 that he had a quicker sensibility, and en-
 dured much more anguish on the cross than
 any one man did, and proportionally thereto
 the views of it might also affect him more.
 " Our * blessed Saviour as he had the greatest
 " endowments of human nature in their
 " greatest perfection, so he had a perfect
 " sense

* Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. III. P. 385.

“ sense of the evils, and pains, and sufferings
“ of it.”

Let not then the courage and fortitude of the martyrs be urged on this occasion. For, suppose some of the accounts to be true, that are given, of their amazing intrepidity and calmness, as our Saviour knew no sin to reconcile himself to sufferings; nor had any seeds of corruption in his frame to abate the terrors of death; and probably, had a delicate texture of body, whereby he was rendered more susceptible of pain: These are circumstances that will make a very wide difference. Wherefore, I conclude, the particular manner and kind of death might naturally create some fear and aversion to his mind at this time, and be, among other things, expressed by him, under the notion of the cup. I say, among other things: for we do not suppose that the agony of our Lord arose, altogether, from the apprehension of the pain and ignominy of crucifixion. Nor can it be thought strange, if, among other things, that should be offensive to him for a short interval, his suffering of which hath since given offence to all the world.

The potion then, of the evils of this cup, may be thus recounted. His being to be betrayed by one of his own disciples; seized and made a prisoner; tried and condemned as a malefactor; delivered up to the *Romans*; mocked and insulted by the soldiery; naked-

ly exposed and tortured on the cross, in the sight of perhaps of a * million of people, and reviled and derided by them and their chiefs, to his last moments. What a darksome scene was here for humanity! In the view and prospect of all this, no wonder *Jesus* should be surprized into a consternation and horror of mind, “ Father, if it be possible, let this “ cup pass from me.” These were the evils, which respected himself, his own person, character, and condition. But there were also other evils before him.

Our Lord might be deeply affected, at this time, by what he knew would be the immediate grievous consequences of his drinking this cup to others.

As he had all the human and social affections, he might be concerned for the *Jewish* nation, who were going to murder him, under the colour of law and justice, and thereby to pull down the vengeance of heaven upon them and their children. Sunk and debased as this people were, they were men. Men to whom *Jesus* was allied. For

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* It is probable the number of the Jews, at *Jerusalem*, at this feast, were seldom less than three millions. See *Josephus of the war*. B. ii. C. 14. V. 3. B. vi. C. 9. V. 3. The execution of so extraordinary a person as *Jesus* was, may be supposed to excite curiosity enough, to draw, at least, one third of the people towards *mount Calvary*. The Evangelists tell us, it was a great company: and that the chief priests and rulers attended.

as concerning the flesh, he descended with them from the same great ancestors, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. And there is no room to doubt but he had as warm propensions, and tendencies, in his composition, to his native country and kindred, as other men. Great and generous minds feel for the unfortunate, and pity the unhappy, more especially where they are of the same country, and the same blood. When our Lord came within sight of *Jerusalem*, and thought of its impending ruin, he could not refrain from tears. The like consideration that made him *weep* then, might affect him now. The cup, before him, was prepared by them. If he drank it, he saw his blood would entail a dismal scene of misery upon them. This, it's certain, lay upon his mind the next morning. For as they led him away to be crucified; he endeavoured to turn the tender concern and grief, which those of his followers expressed, who *bewailed and lamented him*, to their native country, themselves and their posterity. " Daughters of *Jerusalem*, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days are coming in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, &c." (*Luke xxiii. 27--31.*) And it is also certain, that his compassion towards them worked strong even in the sufferings he endured at their hands. For when he felt the torture of being hoisted up, and nailed to the cross,

" then

“ then said *Jesus*, Father, forgive them ; for
 “ they know not what they do.” (*Ver.* 34.)

Again, the effect which he knew his drinking this cup would have on his own disciples, might now be another melancholy consideration to the mind of our Lord. These were the men of his council ; his friends, “ whom
 “ he had chosen out of the world.” There are learned persons, besides *Jerome*, who have thought, that the case of *Judas*, who was just going to undo himself, and render his being a most deplorable infelicity, had some share in exciting this consternation in our Lord. However that be, the case of his other disciples may well be admitted. They were honest men ; and had given frequent proofs of their tender regard for his honour and safety. When others went away, they adhered steadily, and “ hitherto had continued with
 “ him in his temptations.” And himself but lately observed, when he told them of the events that were about to befall him, how *grief filled their hearts*. As with these he had a close connection and intimacy, so he never ceased to bear and express a warm affection for them. *Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.* (*John* xiii. 1.) When he came to the garden with them, and began to think what dark perplexing circumstances, his apprehension, sufferings and death, would cast them into ; how it would distract their minds ; damp all
 their

their pleasing hopes, of his restoring the kingdom to *Israel*; lessen him in their esteem and affections; and, in short, be a trial too hard for their virtue:--I say, when our Lord came to conceive of the distress coming upon them, it is mighty probable, it did not a little contribute to his present disquietude and grief of mind.

Again, the immediate consequence that his drinking this cup would be of to his mother, might be another afflictive consideration. It is dishonourable, and injurious to the character of *Jesus Christ*, to suppose him to be, *without natural affection*. The sublime excellence of his precepts, consists not in eradicating that passion, but, in regulating of it, by placing it in subjection to the love of *God*, or to the pursuit of virtue, truth, and righteousness. A mind benevolent like his, must readily feel for a parent in distress. He knew her solicitude, care, and tenderness for him: nor could he consider his death, and view his connection to her, but *as a sword that should pierce through her soul*. (*Luke ii. 35.*) Wherefore, if, for wise reasons, he was upon the reserve, and concealed his filial passion at any time from her;* and for the same wise reasons,

* It may sound harsh and disrespectful, to us, that *Jesus* should so often call his mother *Woman*. But as he gave her the same appellation, as she stood by the cross, when he recommended her to the care of his beloved disciple *John*, it can imply no such meaning. The truth

sons, it is probable, the Evangelists have not recited all that passed between them, when she came to take her farewell of him at the cross; I say, if *Jesus* was not forward to disclose his love to his mother, it is not improbable, that now, when he was alone, and called to submit to what he knew would wound her heart, his warm instinctive affections began to raise a commotion within him. In the days of his flesh, he was within the ties of blood and nature, and must needs have felt their force. The more these thwarted the noble resolution he had formed of obedience to death, the greater share must they have had in exciting this conflict and agony.

To this it may be objected. Our Lord also knew the happy effects and consequences, his death would produce to mankind in general, more especially to his obedient followers. And as he knew the advantages would be more extensive, and vastly outweigh the disadvantages; the force of this part of the argument may be destroyed.

I answer. Not so, if we attend to our own experience, and the composition of the human frame. For, to borrow the words of a fine writer, " We * have a more lively idea of
" misery

truth seems to be, that, anciently, women of rank and dignity were saluted by that title. Vid. *Macknight* on the gospels. Sect. 19.

* *Grove's moral Philo.* Vol. i. P. 336, 337.

" misery than of happiness. A lesser degree
 " of pain overcomes a greater degree of pleasure,
 " and one trouble is enough to imbit-
 " ter many comforts. The passions that have
 " evil for their object work more violently,
 " than those which terminate in positive good
 " or pleasure." Besides, the happy effects and
 consequences of our Lord's death to others,
 great as they are, being remote, and of a spiritual
 nature, could not have that influence
 on his passions as the evils which he saw im-
 pending. For as the same writer* observes,
 " the pleasures or pains conveyed by the bo-
 " dy, and occasioned by sensible objects, are
 " ordinarily much more lively and forcible in
 " the perception, than those which are pure-
 " ly intellectual. The thing is undeniable,
 " and the reason of it I believe not hard to be
 " produced, being probably grounded in the
 " different manner of conversing with sensible
 " objects, and the objects of the understand-
 " ing. With the former we have a direct
 " correspondence, with the latter only by re-
 " flexion." Thus it is with mankind in ge-
 neral. The consideration of things that are
 nearest the body, more sensibly affect us than
 spiritual considerations. And tho' the latter
 contains the greater good ; and when, as such,
 they have acquired their due influence on the
 judgment, even then they do not, cannot, alter
 one evil that is to be undergone in the pursuit
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* *Ibid.* P. 335.

of that good. And, indeed, had it not been thus also with our Lord, it is difficult to conceive how he should have been, *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. His prospect, of a glorious exaltation, to be *the Prince and Saviour* of a lost world, must have rendered him in a manner impassible, or made his suffering, no suffering at all. Wherefore the objection concludes too much. Our Lord might be concerned, and very probably was, at this time, at what he knew would be the immediate grievous consequences of his drinking the Cup to others.

Thus have we considered what those evils were, that might naturally present themselves to our Lord's mind, which he expressed under the notion of the *Cup*. They were various: some related to himself, and some to others; and all of them together, must have had a considerable influence on his mind, to disturb and render it extremely uneasy. They were evils of such a kind, as were capable of producing such effects.

III. We are, lastly, to take some notice of the circumstances of time and place, when our Lord was in this agony. The operation of the passions and their objects, being the physical cause of a transport either of joy or grief; time and place, which bring them together, are often critical, and promote the operation. And time and place had, probably, their share in the present case. This befell our Lord just

as he had finished his public ministry ;--when he was entering upon a new scene of sufferings ;--and when he was on the spot, where he was to prepare himself and meet them. Let us briefly consider each of these, with what the common workings of human nature are on similar occasions.

In the first place, this befell our Lord just as he had finished his public ministry. Intensity of thought, in a long course of exercise, is, ordinarily, productive of, or succeeded by, perceptions that are irksome and tedious. Such sort of business naturally ends with fatigue : and fatigue discovers itself, thro' all the avenues of the senses, as well in the mind, as in the body. And at such a season, it is notorious, the passions of grief and sorrow lie most open and exposed to objects which excite pain. Evils that are at other times tolerable, come now with double force, and make deep impression. The observation, on this circumstance, was the result of the first branch of our inquiry. It is repeated here, because it serves to illustrate the reasons, or is itself one, why *Jesus* began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

Again. This happened to him, when he was entering upon a new scene of sufferings. At such a crisis, we find things future begin to receive an actual existence, and are, as it were, quickened into life. The passions, big with expectation, are ready to break forth to

meet their objects. There is always something vivid and strong in the perception of bare novelty itself. But when the novelty has a group of painful objects, the perceptions are more interesting, and alarm the whole human frame. Let us suppose one's-self to be about being reduced from a state of affluence to penury; or to be bereaved of one's friends; or to undergo the amputation of a leg, or an arm;--what kind of perceptions should we have? Would they not create a horror to the mind, agitate the animal spirits, or strike on the fine fibres of the heart and brain, so as to make us shudder? If this be agreeable to common experience on such occasions, common experience is a clue, that will help to unravel the cause of the fore amazement of our Lord at this juncture.

Again. He was now on the spot, where he was to prepare himself and meet his sufferings. There may be facts transacted, or a variety of events to which we are subject, which shall make the bare sight of place raise a combination of ideas, and disturb and perplex the mind. It is so natural to connect things with places, that very often we make the latter a sort of focus, where the moment of the whole business is collected. Have we a cause to litigate, or are we called to defend our country? The entrance into the court of judicature, or first view of the field of battle, shall give a more warm and sensible turn to
the

the affections and passions, than perhaps we shall feel thro' the whole trial, or meet with in actual engagement. And if this was not exactly the case of our Lord, yet as he came hither on purpose to prepare and meet his sufferings, those sufferings must necessarily be represented and brought to the full view of his imagination. In order to suit ourselves to a condition, that condition must be surveyed, and entered into by the mind. Wherefore we may suppose, that the first perception our Lord had, when he was at the place, was the kind and importance of the evils, to which he was now to submit. This supposition is both pious and natural. Then we address the supreme Being with propriety, when we have viewed the exigency of our affairs. We seldom need to court objects of pain. They are known to intrude themselves too often with a sort of eagerness. But in the present circumstance they are called for, and the attention of the mind to them is, as it were, demanded. Wherefore our Lord could not but be conscious of the perception he had of the evils before him. And that consciousness must encrease in proportion to the number and weight they bore. It is agreeable to the natural order of things that it should be so. So that it is no wonder, if a round of misery was the only perception he was for a time conscious of. Now, here, was he to be betrayed by one of his own disciples, — seized and bound like a thief,

thief,—abandoned by his friends,—led away and treated with cruel and indignant usage. And the consequences hereof, replete with evils, found easy access, we may suppose, to a mind like his. The language of the best human heart on such an occasion would be, Oh ! what will become of my country, and of the men I love ! What an agitation would a man feel in his animal spirits, and how acute and powerful the operation between his passions and their objects in such a state and crisis as this ! It is evident, the perception of misery, now, is right, and as it should be : And the commotion that ensues is natural, and what will be. With respect to the latter, reason is too sublime, or comes too slow, to have any thing presently to do in the case. The violence of the commotion must cease, before the understanding can attend to the dictates of reason. After this manner, probably, was *Jesus* exercised at this juncture.

It is true, *Jesus* was no stranger to the place, having accustomed himself to come hither and pray. Nor was he ignorant of the things that were to befall him here. It is probable, that those had been the usual subject of his meditation. But how conversant soever the mind may be about distant objects, such is its make and constitution in the body, that the nearer they approach some certain point, the greater effect will they have. I say some certain point ; for afflictions have their particular

cular point of view, whence they appear in full magnitude and proportion, as well as other objects. Agreeably hereunto it is observable of *Jesus*, that when he was in the coasts of *Cæsarea Philippi*, and also as he was coming up to *Jerusalem*, he spake of those things with much calmness and composure, and seemed only straightened and uneasy with an earnest desire that it were well over. (*Matth.* xvi. 21. *Mark* x. 33. *Luke* xii. 50.) But when he was come to *Jerusalem*, and was discoursing on this subject, about four days ago, in the temple; if he was not ruffled and discomposed by it then, it made however such an impression, that we find him avowing the force of human affections and passions. “ Now is
“ my soul troubled, and what shall I say?”
Shall I say, “ Father save me from this hour?”
No. “ But for this cause came I unto this
“ hour?” (*John* xii. 37.) But the woeful period being now advanced, and the Cup ready prepared; he at the place, and *Judas*, and the band of soldiers at hand to apprehend him like a *Thief*.—The objects rushed in as it were all at once upon his mind, and straitway he feels, and indeed acknowledges, a more acute sense of those evils, than ever he did before. “ Then said he unto them, my soul
“ is exceeding sorrowful even unto death:
“ Tarry ye here, and watch with me. And
“ he went a little further, and fell on his
“ face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it
“ be possible, let this Cup pass from me:
“ never-

" nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matth. xxvi. 38, 39.) The objects, in view, seized, and surprized the imagination, and stimulated the passions; excited fear, and fear raised sorrow and astonishment; insomuch that, in this conjuncture, he offered up that petition, which he would not have offered at any other time.

Question. Was there not something pusillanimous, and inconstant, in this part of our Saviour's conduct? I answer. No. Those expressions are far too harsh, and cannot be applied to our Lord, without manifest injustice. He had not, indeed, that intrepidity, for which the rude heroes of history are celebrated, who were fearless and undaunted in their greatest dangers. What then? Was a character expected in him that required a peculiar warmth of the blood and juices, and the impetus of some criminal passion to form and exhibit? Natural courage is well known to be mechanical, and to rise and fall with a certain temperature of the body. And that which is next akin to it derives its birth from some reigning passions. " There is hardly any one of the passions," (saith an excellent writer I quoted before,) " when it is violent, but has its champions; " whom it inspirits and imboldens to a degree. The *Miser* can rush through flames " to save his wealth, and the *Lover* carry his " life on the point of his sword for sake of " his mistress. But the passions which have
" most

“ most filled the world with *heroes*, are *vain*
 “ *glory*, and a dread of the reproach of
 “ *cowardice*.” *Grove* 2d Vol. P. 259.

What is to be looked for in the blessed *Jesus*, is, a perfectly moral character. Now a manly virtuous courage is so far from being incompatible with, that it supposes *fear*. For as that is inspired with a sense of what is just and honourable, the fear of infamy to oneself, or of injury to others, must needs take place, inasmuch as the objects are evils that ought, if possible, to be avoided, and when, and in whomsoever those fears shall coincide with the natural fear of death, a passive fortitude is all that can be expected.

And, as to *inconstancy* of mind, I ask, Who is there among the sons of men, or what are they, whom the circumstances of time and place, in respect to a cruel and ignominious death will not sensibly affect? If recourse be had to the martyrs, we must refer the reader back to what has been spoken concerning them already. A person doom'd to suffer as a state criminal, may indeed put on the *Stoic* on such an occasion, and in point of prudence, as it is called, or for the sake of his honour, stifle his passions from the view of others. And no doubt but that this has often been the case. But our Lord acted upon no such mean motives. He felt things to impress him differently, and he told what he felt. The mind is not answerable for these different impres-

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sions. They are unavoidable to it, and the result of the human frame. Had not *Jesus* shewn a reluctance to the evils now before him, the reality of his sufferings might justly have been called in question. And so far was he in this his behaviour from acting an *inconsistent*, or *inconstant part*, that notwithstanding he felt a greater uneasiness to himself than at any other time, he stood firm to the noble resolution he had formed, of an intire submissive obedience to the divine will.

There is then no impeachment of the courage and constancy of our Lord. His character remains unfullied, yea, shines thro' the darkest cloud that ever passed over him. Even those who are no friends to his mission, must needs applaud his conduct, on their own principle, that "resignation to the will of God is true magnanimity."*

From the hints which the Evangelists have given us, we may briefly subjoin a word or two, in this place, touching the degree; and duration of the agony.

As to the degree of anguish which our Lord felt, *St. Luke* relates, that, "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." These words do not necessarily imply, that the matter of this sweat was blood; for to sweat blood may only

* *Bolingbroke's Letters*, Vol. 2d. P. 285.

only be (as *Photius* observes, *Credibil. Gos. His.* Vol. xi. P. 406) “ a proverbial expression concerning such as were in great agony of mind. So likewise it is said of such as are in great grief, that they weep tears of blood.” However, in this sense is shewn the fore conflict of his passions on this occasion, the vastness of that consternation, and deadly pain which he felt. His sweat was not a common one, trickling like drops of dew or rain from his face ; but extraordinary, being a thick and glutinous kind of matter, *as it were drops of blood falling down to the ground.* His animal nature made this effort, pushed as it were to the last extremity. It is indeed possible that the *agony* might be so great as to force blood from his capillary veins to mix with his sweat. See *Whitby* on the place. Those who rightly consider, or are acquainted with the working of the passions, under the sudden impressions of certain objects, will not think that incredible. By means of the passions the blood is often accelerated, or retarded in its course. And joy or sorrow, when sudden and great, has been known to produce amazing effects. “ Before the sight of the objects of the passion, the animal spirits were pretty equally diffused throughout the body, but the presence of the new object disturbs the whole œconomy. Sudden and great fear does so convulse the nervous system, that it sometimes alters the

“ positions of the parts. Thus the hair shall
 “ stand an end in a fright, and the nerves be
 “ rendered so stiff and rigid as to stop at once
 “ the animal functions ; whence fainting and
 “ sometimes death.”

As to its duration : how long this deep distress and agony of our Lord lasted, we are not exactly informed. It is probable, it was not above the space of *one hour*, from the time of his retiring apart with the three disciples, to pray, to the time that *Judas* and the band came to apprehend him. If so, his sorrow and extreme anguish might not continue on him a quarter of that space. He found his heart distend with grief when he took *Peter*, and *James*, and *John* aside from the other disciples. Then he began to give it vent, first to them, and afterwards to his heavenly father. His first prayer seems to be offered up in the very crisis. The passions both selfish and social, that are seated in the human heart, were so struck at the many and great evils which were before him, as to confound and astonish his soul, and throw him into perplexity. He then poured out himself as it were in prayer to have those evils, if possible, averted ; and the pores of his body burst open with the fervour of his mind. In that dark interval *there appeared unto him an angel from heaven strengthening him*. Some cheering vision, it may be, presented, what the *Author* to the *Hebrews* calls *the joy that was set before him ;*
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by means whereof he soon recovered his strength and fortitude. His expressions in prayer the second time were manifestly altered, and bespoke not that fear and reluctance that those of the former did; but rather his full acquiescence and readiness to accept the cup. And after he had been the third time and prayed again, we find him so composed, as to awake all his disciples, put himself at their head, and, when the officers came into the garden, to apprehend him, to go forward, and say unto them, *whom seek ye?* (*John xviii. 4.*) But whatever the exact duration of the agony was, it is evident, we have no need to recur to any absurd, or fanciful, hypothesis, or ascribe it to some I know not what impenetrable cause. We have found *data* enough from whence to conclude, that all was natural, and genuinely proceeded from the humanity of our Lord.

Having thus attempted to investigate the causes of our Saviour's agony in the garden, one objection, or difficulty yet remains.

Did not *Jesus* know, from the scriptures, that the Messiah was to suffer these things? And if the cup had been removed from him according to his earnest request, how then should the scriptures have been fulfilled?

I answer. *Jesus* did know, that thus it must be. And if the cup had been removed from him, it is certain, the scriptures could not have been fulfilled, which spake of his being
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to be numbered with the transgressors, and cut off. Neither could he have answered that character of the Messiah. This our Lord well knew, as appears, by what afterwards he said, in his reproof to *Peter*, when he drew his sword, and smote a servant of the high priest's, and cut off his ear: "Put up again thy sword
 " into his place, for all they that take the
 " sword shall perish with the sword.*
 " Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to
 " my Father, and he shall presently give me
 " more than twelve legions of angels. But
 " how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled,
 " that thus it must be?" (*Matth.* xxvi. 53, 54.) It is very possible that the sorrow and consternation our Lord was in, was so great, during that short interval, as prevented the due weight of, or attention of the mind to, that
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* *Peter*, being conscious of his late supine behaviour towards his master in his agony, when he saw his voluntary surrender of himself, was for engaging in his defence. But he was as wrong in the means, as unseasonable in his zeal. Prayer was what his master had recommended, and practised on the occasion. And if he prayed against the evils that were coming; *Peter* did not hear him pray for force to repel, and ward them off. This seems to be the ground of the reproof, here given unto him; wherein our Lord not only discountenanced the use of the sword, as a measure always precarious and dangerous to those that trusted thereto, but propounds to him the following question: "Thinkest
 " thou," if outward force was expedient in my case,
 " I could not now pray to my Father, and he shall pre-
 " sently give me more then twelve legions of angels,"
 i. e.

consideration. I see no reason against admitting this to be indeed the most probable truth of the case. He was made flesh like us. Now, according to the laws to which the human mind in this state is subject, of two or more perceptions, that which is accompanied with uneasiness, carries the first attention. And if the evil apprehended be great, the mind in proportion may be so engaged, as to be conscious for a time but of that one perception. But waving, here, all abstract arguments. They know but little of the world, who know not the nature of trouble, and that its dismal effects are of this kind. It is the property of grief to stupify and benumb the soul to every thing but what distresses it.* And as
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i. e. a superior force, from heaven? "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?" St. *John*, who omits the agony so fully related by the other Evangelists, relates the reproof here given to *Peter*, with a question put to him by our Lord concerning the cup, which they had omitted. And it stands thus: "Put up thy sword into the sheath; the cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" If we take this in harmony and connection, with the parallel places in the other Evangelists, it is as if he said, What, if you did hear me express my wish, that if possible, I might escape the evils, from which you would now defend me; since my Father has determined otherwise, agreeable to what the scriptures foretold, shall I not cheerfully submit?

* "It is a thing not at all unnatural, for a person under an excessive load of grief to forget himself a little, and to talk inconsistently." *Peters's Critic. Dissert. on Job. P. 54.*

our Lord was to be " a man of sorrows, and
 " acquainted with grief." To know and to be
 made intimate as it were with every sort of
 it incident to man. " To bear our griefs, and
 " carry our sorrows." (*I/a.* liii. 3.) That very
 grief, to which he was now put by the natu-
 ral concurrence and state of things under the
 direction of providence, came up to answer
 one character that was exactly foretold of
 him.

We may here also briefly obviate another
 like difficulty, which some who run high for
 objections may start. " Is it not dishonoura-
 " ble to *Jesus*, not to know that his death
 " was decreed ; and if he knew it, to pray
 " against it ?" To which we need only reply,
 That he did not immediately either think
 upon, or discover any notion he had of an
 absolute inflexible decree in the case. Great
 as his dread of death was, in all those terrible
 circumstances to himself, and consequences to
 others, he did not seem to apprehend, then,
 that it was so fixed and determined, that it
 could *not* be dispensed with. If we may judge
 by his language and expression, he did not
 make impossibilities the subject of his request.
 He prayed thus : " Abba, Father, all things
 " are possible unto thee ; take away this cup
 " from me ; nevertheless, not what I will,
 " but what thou wilt."

Before we close, there is one thing which
 may deserve special notice, and which pos-
 sibly

sibly hath occurred to the reader's thoughts, in the course of this inquiry, as somewhat strange, *namely*, that our Lord should pray for the removal of the cup away from him, rather than for a mitigation of the evils thereof. But perhaps this is to be accounted for, from the nature of the evils themselves. They were all of such a sort (as the reader will find, if he will give himself the trouble to look back and reflect upon them) as scarce to admit of any mitigation, except in the article of crucifixion. That was a punishment indeed, that admitted of a long continuance in misery. From whence some learned persons have thought it probable, that when our Lord prayed, that the cup might pass away from him, it was with a view to this suffering only, that the pains of death might not stay, or continue long with him. But as he himself, in his second prayer, explained his own meaning in the first, *namely*, That it might so pass away from him, that he might not drink it; we are not at liberty to fix any other sense to his words. (See *Matth.* xxvi. 42.)

If the single circumstance of long and increasing misery, had any peculiar moment on the passions of our Lord, it was not, I humbly apprehend, in the garden, but afterwards, when the scene was changed to *Calvary*. For he appears to have patiently endured six hours, on the cross, before he obtained leave from his Father to resign his spirit. And that

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seems to have been the true occasion of his sorrowful exclamation. "About the ninth hour, *Jesus* cried with a loud voice," repeating the words of his royal progenitor in his distress. (*Psal.* xxii. 1.) "*Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani*, that is to say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" or, as the words will bear, my God, my God, to what a degree, or to what a length of time hast thou forsaken me! For *lama*, in the *Hebrew*, has this signification.* It was usual for persons hanged on the cross, to linger in pain for some days, unless dispatched sooner by violent means. "The *Jews* therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day (for that sabbath was an high day) besought *Pilate* that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." (*John* xix. 31.) As *Jesus* had refused the stupifying draught, usually given on such occasions, (*Matth.* xxvii. 34.) he had the utmost sensibility. And if he knew of the foregoing application to *Pilate*, and the order obtained from him, that their legs might be broken, as is highly probable, before he obtained leave from the Father to yield up the ghost;--his fear might be raised, lest he should also suffer that further violence. And if the exclamation contained this his apprehension

* Vid. *Macknight* on the gospels. Sect. 145.

hension or fear of being left in the hands of men to endure more misery; it was also expressive of his high dependence, and trust in God for deliverance. And God his Father soon heard his cry. "After this, *Jesus*, knowing that all things were now accomplished," by perhaps feeling in himself some symptom common to mortals in death, "that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar, and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon a reed, and put it to his mouth. When *Jesus* therefore had received the vinegar, he cried again with a loud voice, and said, it is finished. And he bowed his head and gave up the ghost." (Comp. *Matth.* xxvii. 46--51. *John* xix. 28--31.)

Here was certainly something very wonderful in his crying out, and giving up the ghost so soon. (See *Mark* xv. 19. 44.) The first exclamation contained matter of grief: the latter of triumph. And if we have hit on the true occasion of the former, it is natural to think that the first scripture which the Evangelist *St. John* had his eye upon, as remarkably fulfilled, by the intervention of providence in shortening the life of our Lord upon the cross, was, *Psal.* xxxiv. 19, 20. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken." It was, probably, of this agony

on the cross, the Author to the *Hebrews* chiefly speaks, tho' that in the garden might also enter into his argument. (*Heb.* v. 7.) " Who
 " in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong
 " crying and tears, unto him that was able
 " to save him from death, and was heard
 " in that he feared." If these sentiments, concerning our Lord's agony on the cross, bear the marks of truth, the inserting of them in this place, will be deemed no digression from the subject.

To conclude this inquiry. Tho' we may not fathom all the designs of providence in permitting *Jesus Christ* to be so oppressed and afflicted, as he was in the garden, yet some of its wise ends may be supposed to be as follows.

(1.) To ascertain his real proper humanity. The miraculous birth of *Jesus Christ* exalted him above the common level of men. And as his death was not natural, but the result of his free and voluntary obedience, there might be room to call his humanity in question. Wherefore to avoid this difficulty, it seems, as if providence had furnished us with the present view of our Lord. For when we see, that he had all the like sensations and impressions from outward evils; that he expressed the same passions and affections, for himself and others, in the same manner that we do; there is no reason to conclude but that he

he had a like organical body, or was constituted of flesh and blood in common with us. This is an important point of doctrine, and, therefore, was necessary to be rendered very plain and evident. "Every spirit that confesseth that *Jesus Christ* is come in the flesh, is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that *Jesus Christ* is come in the flesh, is not of God." (1 *John* iv. 2, 3.) The denial of the real proper humanity of our Lord, was one of the first errors that infested the church. It sprang up among the Gnostics, who affirmed, that his body was only fantastical and imaginary. And after them the Manicheans also taught, that he was man in appearance only. But the Gospels, we see, not only speak clearly and distinctly of his body, and of his soul, and represent their union and connection in very familiar language, (*Luke* ii. 52.) but relate his deadly sorrow, and sore amazement in the garden, on purpose, as it were, to exhibit him to us incarnate. Hence the author to the *Hebrews* most fitly styles the time when this happened, "the days of his flesh." (*Heb.* v. 7.) This, then, may be one wise end, in this wonderful scheme of providence, why "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief."

(2.) To vindicate human nature, and shew that it is no disparagement of us, either as men or as Christians, to be affected with outward evils.

evils. *Jesus* was very sensible of his own and others sufferings, and conceived a dread and horror at them. He was so fore-amazed, and full of grief, as to earnestly pray, that, “ if “ it were possible, the cup might pass away “ from him.” A true picture this, of genuine humanity in distress. It is natural to us to hate pain, and to have an abhorrence of misery. The constitution of our beings requires it should be so. It is the first and strongest principle the creator hath cast into the human frame. The philosophy taught in the heathen world by *Zeno* and his followers, that pains and afflictions are no evils, and that a wise man should be hardened against all sense of them, was truly perverse, not perfective, of the nature of man. To feel calamities, when they come upon us, or upon others, and to give vent to our tears,* is much more congruous and suitable to our frame and station, than the apathy and rant of the stoicks. We are connected with flesh and blood, made with
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* “ They who of all writers undertake to imitate “ nature most, oft introduce even their heroes weeping. “ See how *Homer* represents *Ulysses*. *Od.* i. 151. 2--7, “ 8. The tears of men are in truth very different from “ the cries and ejaculations of children. They are silent “ streams, and flow from other causes: commonly some “ tender or perhaps philosophical, reflection. It is easy “ to see how hard hearts, and dry eyes, come to be “ fashionable. But for all that, it is certain, the *Glandulæ lacrymales* are not made for nothing.” *Relig. Nat. Delin.* P. 139. N.

selfish and social affections and passions, and placed here in a state of discipline; and a tender susceptible temper better becomes us, and will sooner perfect our virtue, than insensibility and fool-hardiness. This consideration alone, if there were none other, should make us not ashamed of *Jesus* in his agony, in the garden, or on the cross.

(3.) To render him an example to us of moral and religious conduct in adversity. This is the end of his sufferings in general, as affirmed by St. *Peter*. (1 *Ep.* ii. 21.) By contemplating his sufferings, in the garden in particular, we see the way or manner how to practise our duty in the most distressing circumstances, without putting a force upon our beings. Self-preservation, and the desire to avoid pain, were equally vivid and strong in him, as in us. It is plain, he did not prevent himself from feeling the due weight and influence of these principles. But he has shewn, in his conduct, the right use and subjection of them to the supreme will of heaven. And here the affliction of our Lord answers a very important and instructive end, and indeed produces one chief excellence of the Christian faith. “ Our religion sets before us not the
 “ example of a stupid stoick, who had by
 “ obstinate principles hardened himself against
 “ all sense of pain, beyond the common mea-
 “ sures of humanity, but an example that lies
 “ level to all mankind, of a man like our-
 “ selves,

“ selves, that had a tender sense of the least
 “ suffering, and yet patiently endured the
 “ greatest.”* We may follow him without
 distorting nature to go beyond our selves.
 When he began to be sorrowful and very
 heavy, he retired to God in prayer, with a re-
 verential sense of his omnipotent power. And
 if he prayed, once, with great vehemency,
 “ O my Father, if it be possible, take away
 “ this cup from me :” We find it was even
 then accompanied with the most profound
 submission : “ nevertheless, not as I will,
 “ but as thou wilt.” Let us then take the
 benefit of this noble example : and when God
 in his providence shall put the cup of af-
 fliction into our hands, imitate the piety of
 our Lord. We may be called to suffer in
 our selves, or in others, or in both together,
 in such a manner as to feel the force of every
 tender passion at once, as he was. And in
 such circumstances we shall do well to pray.
 And we may mix our tears with our prayers,
 and earnestly supplicate for a removal of the
 evils we dread, as *Jesus* did. But God knows
 best. He did not excuse his own Son from
 “ learning obedience by the things which he
 “ suffered.” Why then should we expect an
 exemption ? Do we need such documents less
 than he ? or are the evils of our cup equal to
 those of his ?--Whatever they be, Be this ever
 remem-

* Archbishop Tillotson, Vol. I. P. 53.

remembered by us, that afflicted and oppressed as *Jesus* was, he paid a supreme regard to the will of his heavenly Father. The stronger his perceptions were of pain, and the more ardent his desires to avoid it were, in this trial; the more substantial a proof he gave of his virtue. Let then our hearts be conversant with, till we fairly copy off this pattern in our Lord, and from the deepest affliction he will lead us on to true glory and greatness. We shall shine in his image, when his submission, and final resolve implied in the following words, are made ours: the cup, which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? A devout resignation, and humble acquiescence in the will of God, under the evils of life, is the highest and noblest part a rational creature can act.

(4.) To finish and perfect him for the exercise of his mediatorial dignity. This is expressly asserted by the author to the *Hebrews*. "He was made perfect through sufferings." (*Heb. ii. 10.*) *i. e.* compleated, fitted and qualified, in this way or manner, to enter upon his high office. His sufferings gave the finishing stroke to his character. "He underwent in the severest manner all the evils of life, just as we common mortals do."* And thus by adding to his speculative, an experimental knowledge of

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* Dr. Syke's on *Heb. iv. 15.*

our make and frame, frailties and miseries, our Prince, Captain and Leader, is able to succour and relieve us in all our temptations. One who was so tried in our nature, may well be supposed tender, affectionate, and friendly to mankind; disposed to make merciful allowances in their favour, and qualified with moderation and equity to distribute rewards and punishments to every proper object. "God will judge the World in righteousness, by this MAN whom he hath ordained, of which he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." (*Acts* xvii. 31.) This is pure gospel.

(5.) To instruct us, to ascribe the glory of our redemption ultimately to God.

There is an aptitude in the character of Christ to affect the passions. He became as one of us, and is not ashamed to call us brethren. And as all he did and suffered on earth, was upon our account, he is worthy of our warmest love and gratitude. But lest the passions should mislead our judgment in the object of supreme adoration, (as by means of our weakness they are prone to do in other cases;) and should incite us to give preference to his character before that of his God and Father; a remedy seems to be here provided. An attention to our Lord's agony, will either prevent or cure that error. His prayers will direct us aright to the object, in
whose

whose glory all our thanksgivings must terminate.

God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all? (*Rom.* viii. 32.) His free love was the original source. He formed the plan; and he superintended the execution of it. The work, which *Jesus* finished, and the cup which he drank, were both given him of the Father. At his appointment he came into the world, that the world thro' him might be saved. And when his preaching was ineffectual to that purpose, he submitted to bear the largest measure of innocent sufferings, both in body and mind, that so the gospel might carry all possible motives and illustrations of its truth, according to the will of God for our salvation. It was this supreme will and good pleasure of God, which *Jesus* kept his eye upon, and to which he ultimately referred himself, even in that conjuncture, when the passions were struck at once by the near approach of the most astonishing evils; and the human heart for an instant was ready as it were to recoil: "O my Father,—nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." For this his humiliation and spotless obedience to death, even the death of the cross, he is crowned with divine honours, and constituted Lord over all, to the glory of God the Father.

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If the agony of our Lord in the garden, appear to answer these valuable ends, the wisdom of God, in permitting it, must be acknowledged. And we by our sober researches shall find some rational grounds for our faith, even in the hard and most difficult parts of that doctrine, which is designed for the life of the world.

F I N I S.

